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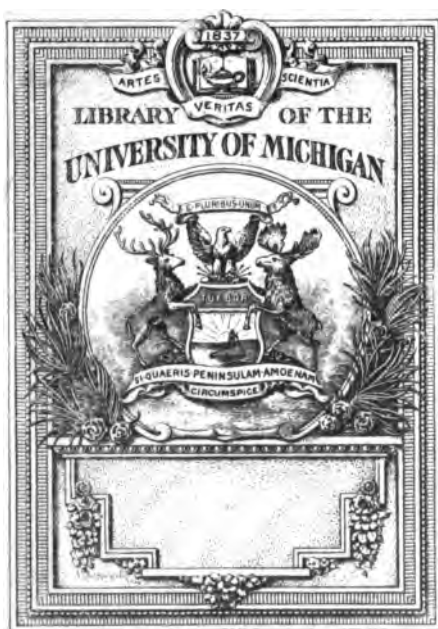
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# PHILO-SOCRATES.

A SERIES of Papers, wherein subjects are investigated which, there is reason to believe, would have interested Socrates, and in a manner that he would not disapprove, were he among us now, gifted with the knowledge, and familiar with the habits and doings, of our times.

BY WILLIAM ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF "RELIGION IN COMMON LIFE," "OUTLINES OF SOCIAL ECONOMY,"  
ETC. ETC.

VOL. II.—Among the Teachers.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

1864.



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# PHILO-SOCRATES.

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## AMONG THE TEACHERS.

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### ON GOOD CHRISTIANS.

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*T.* THEY tell us, Philo, that you are an enemy of religion ; and that is why they dislike your teaching the boys.

*P.* And who are " they " who thus strive to injure me, and, I may say, the boys also, and seem to terrify you ?

*T.* They do not terrify, but they vex and distress us, because we respect them, and we also like your teaching.

*P.* But who are they ?

*T.* They are men who have devoted time and money to education—who are engaged in many charitable works ; and we believe them to be truly good Christians.

*P.* I perceive they have done more than vex and distress you. They have led you to suspect, if they have not persuaded you, that I am doing mischief—that I am misleading the boys.

*T.* They have not, indeed, got so far as that.

*P.* Perhaps we do not understand one another. Did you

not say that they are good Christians, and that they disapprove my teachings?

*T.* Yes; but we did not say that they might not be mistaken. We think they are. We have followed your teachings very closely, and have never heard anything of which we do not highly approve.

*P.* This censure of me, then, would have been more alarming had it come from men who stand high with you for their intelligence, as well as for being "good Christians." I presume you do not doubt their sincerity, and consider that they believe themselves, while they revile me.

*T.* You should not use so harsh a term. They don't revile you.

*P.* Is not an enemy of religion, in their estimation, an enemy of truth, and of goodness, and wisdom? A character such as that ought to be attached to nobody who is not known to deserve it. They who are guilty of originating or circulating a report of the kind before they have ascertained it to be true, are worse than revilers—they are calumniators and defamers.

*T.* We are sure that they are sincere in what they say of you; but they are mistaken. They really have no idea of what you are teaching.

*P.* You do not convey to me a very exalted notion of your "good Christian" friends. They seem quick in condemning unheard. They may be as slow in comprehending when they have heard.

*T.* What has principally prejudiced them against you is that you do not teach from the Bible.

*P.* Their sincerity, and the conscientiousness with which they endeavour to ascertain the truth of a charge before they make it, are matters of secondary importance, to us, at least, if not to them. Let us pass on to what concerns us more deeply. I am quite prepared to examine scrupulously, with your assistance, any part of my teaching or of my method of conducting it, that you can call my attention to as objection-

able in the opinion of your "good Christian" friends, or as requiring explanation in your own.

*T.* They say, and we have always been taught to believe, that education ought to be based upon the Bible. And do you not differ from them?

*P.* Before I can differ from, or agree with them, I must understand what they mean. At present, I do not. And I have some doubt whether they understand themselves. As you are in earnest, and seem to share their opinions, you may be the medium for making us better acquainted. Now, as rational men, with some cultivation, you cannot be surprised, having attended some of my classes, that I should wish to be master of what I undertake to teach to others.

*T.* You do not pretend that you have not studied and mastered your Bible?

*P.* I have certainly studied, and I may say, without boasting, that I have mastered it sufficiently to be convinced that it is less adapted for boys and girls than for men and women. However elevating, admonishing, and consoling its pages may prove to men and women,—to boys and girls, till adequately prepared, they can scarcely fail to be damaging. If addressed to boys and girls at all, the Bible is only addressed to them through men and women. You know as well as I do that there are Christians held to be quite as good as your friends who concur in this opinion. Assuming these two classes of Christians to be equally sincere in the enunciation of their convictions, to be equally good in intention, our inquiry may enable us to decide which are the wiser, and hence the better, in conduct. I will lay down one rule about which there can be no dispute between us: the Bible must be treated with respect, and the understandings and feelings of children, also.

*T.* As to that, we are certainly of one mind.

*P.* Let us be cautious. We ought to make sure that we are agreed as to what is implied by "treating with respect." Which teacher would treat the Bible and its students with greater respect—he who, before he invited boys to read the



Bible, put them through a course of mental training to prepare them for understanding what they read, or he who insists that boys shall read the Bible, having taken no pains beforehand to qualify them for its perusal with profit, and not pretending either to explain what is read, or to ascertain the impression left by passages which admit of very different interpretations?

*T.* The former of the two, of course. But we should prefer a third teacher, who would prepare his boys to read the Bible, and then read it with them, encouraging them to state all their difficulties, and ascertaining, by familiar conversations and careful examinations, what thoughts and impressions were likely to have been left by their Bible-readings.

*P.* Do you teach algebra and logarithms to the younger children in your schools?

*T.* Of course not. To attempt to teach them would be preposterous.

*P.* Are you desirous that the children who remain long enough with you should understand the elements of the former, and the principles on which logarithmic tables are formed, facilitating, as they do, most of our difficult and otherwise tedious calculations?

*T.* We certainly are.

*P.* Knowing, as you do, that most of your children are removed from your tuition far earlier than is desirable for their good; knowing also how desirable it is that every man should be instructed in the branches of knowledge which I have mentioned, how can you reconcile to yourselves the omission of any attempt to teach them to your younger children?

*T.* We yield to necessity. We can neither get rid of the feebleness inherent in childhood, nor teach algebra and logarithms, any more than we could teach conic sections and the differential calculus, without first teaching the preliminary subjects out of which they grow.

*P.* Do I understand that, given the opportunity, you would teach all these branches of knowledge; although you exclude

them from your schools, except so far as your elder and more advanced scholars are concerned?

*T.* We would. Moreover, we think we best show our earnest desire to do as much by carefully grounding our children, from the very outset, in the principles of arithmetic—in numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, proportions, and fractions, vulgar and decimal.

*P.* And what would you think of me, if, disregarding all this common sense, while absorbed in the persuasion of the all-importance to men that they should be masters of the best expedients for working problems, but noticing that algebra and logarithms were not taught in your regular classes, I were to represent you as enemies to those branches of knowledge, and hence to the boys excluded from them through your negligence, or ignorance, or perversity?

*T.* We should, without question, set you down as a very mistaken and wrong-headed man. And we would try to persuade you that to attempt the instruction which your accusation against us implied a wish to have given, would be a very effective method for disqualifying, not for qualifying, children to become as men instructed in useful knowledge, and diligent and expert in turning it to account.

*P.* What would you say, if the only notice which I condescended to take of your justification, in answer to my reproaches, was to insist that the elementary principles of arithmetic should never be taught with my consent in your schools unless based upon the differential calculus?

*T.* We don't know what we might say, but we should think that you were either demented or indulging in banter out of season.

*P.* May I not have similar thoughts, intensified by the sacredness of the subject, when I hear it gravely pretended, not that the Bible should be based upon education, but that education should be based upon the Bible?

*T.* It never occurred to us that the determination to make the Bible the basis of education might be an inversion of the

order of proceeding best adapted to arrive at good education in conjunction with a just appreciation of the lessons to be learned from the Bible. We were captivated, as others have been, by the suggestion of making the Bible the ark of hope in childhood, as it is the ark of safety in manhood, and of refuge in old age.

*P.* And the question to be solved is—how teaching and training should be conducted—how children should be dealt with so as to lead them to seek hope, safety, and refuge where alone they are to be found, and to qualify them for conducting their search successfully. I require as much conscientious and intelligent care in teaching the Bible as in teaching any other book. You would not quarrel with me if I insisted upon more. Let me ask, then, do you know of any schools where this course is pursued in studying the Bible? You do not. Do you know of any schools in which avowals of belief, assumed to be drawn unerringly from the Bible, are, as far as such things can be done, imposed upon the children, the Bible being read by them without either encouragement or assistance, to establish concordance between their own avowals of belief and the impressions left by the words which they have read? You do. And do you know of other schools where it is insisted that the Bible shall be read, it being made a boast that the reading will be unaccompanied by any attempt to ascertain in what sense passages bearing upon varieties of conduct are received, or to exercise the memories of the children upon the subject-matter of the reading, beyond the words, the dates, and the places mentioned? You do. I would ask, then, is the Bible treated with respect by any of these teachers?

*T.* To teach the Bible as you say it ought to be taught would be impossible with children.

*P.* Am I to understand that, in your opinion, the Bible can only be taught to children by treating it with disrespect?

*T.* You have placed us on the horns of a dilemma, but you have not convinced us.

*P.* In my own studies, my own self-questioning, I have often found myself on similar horns, but not without being convinced of ignorance, of which I had previously been unaware.

*T.* You have often shown us how much we had to learn, and we do not wish now to conceal our ignorance, either from you or from ourselves.

*P.* The greatest difficulty in the way of all learners is, ignorance of their ignorance. It not only stands in the way of their seeking knowledge, but it blinds them to the necessity of taking precautions against mistaking their very ignorance for knowledge, and of applying for assistance to him who has the knowledge, which they neither have nor are likely to get without assistance. It leads them to pursue error with a portion of that energy which, even when well-directed, is found inadequate to satisfy the yearnings of the more zealous seekers after truth.

*T.* Let us hope that we have made our first step towards the knowledge which we seek, being aware of our own ignorance. We look to you for assistance out of it.

*P.* And, as is my wont, I shall do little more than suggest matter for your own reflections. You are seeking for truth, and so am I. Being greatly your senior, and having been long in search of it, I may be somewhat in advance of you. Most gladly will I help you over any of the difficulties that I may be supposed to have conquered, with help from others, similar to that which you are seeking from me. I thought it rather hard that you should try to stop me in my search, by representing that I had brought down upon myself the censure of certain "good Christians." Can you tell me how you distinguish a "good" from a "bad" Christian—for it behoves us not to expose ourselves unnecessarily to the censure of the good?

*T.* It is necessary, above all things, in order to be a Christian, to be a good man.

*P.* Cannot a bad man be a Christian?

*T.* Strictly speaking, we should say, "No."

*P.* Do you not perceive how greatly you add to the difficulties in the way of our ever coming to an understanding, by the use of such expressions as "strictly speaking," which implies that you do not always speak strictly; that you sometimes use language carelessly and loosely, and make it a cloke for vagueness, insincerity, and error. This, I take it, you do not intend to do?

*T.* You will excuse us; but we have not been trained to use language, we were going to say, so severely, we ought to say, so accurately as we acknowledge is desirable, if we would arrive at truth.

*P.* We have a matter to examine of great importance to you, to me, and to society—the subjects to be taught, and the method of teaching them to children. I have adopted opinions and shaped my practice. Are my opinions sound and my practice judicious?

*T.* That is what we would be satisfied upon.

*P.* In due time I shall be quite prepared to submit to your judgments my justification of both. But we must first disencumber ourselves of anything extraneous that might perplex, mislead, or distract us. We shall need all the sagacity and love of truth that we can muster, without wasting them in irrelevant discussion. Understanding, then, that by a Christian you mean a good and well-intentioned man, whatever else you may mean, ought I to surrender my own conceptions of what is true in doctrine and judicious in practice, because such a one objects to them?

*T.* Not to surrender; but it would lead you to ponder—to reconsider.

*P.* And suppose I have pondered, and reconsidered, and have, by so doing, confirmed my previous decisions?

*T.* You ought, of course, to hold by your own decisions.

*P.* The repeated examinations to which I have subjected my own decisions, side by side with the reasons of objectors, so far as I could get at any, may have enabled me to detect

the errors and contradictions of those from whom I dissent : ought I to conceal or expose them ?

*T.* Expose them, certainly. Truth demands that there should be no concealment.

*P.* One may still be a little haunted with the thought of being at variance with Christians. To allay one's uneasiness, one might inquire, not being able to concur with them, whether Christians were always intelligent as well as good men. What will your answer be to such an inquiry ?

*T.* It is impossible to maintain that all Christians are intelligent.

*P.* Ought my distress of mind to be alleviated on finding that the Christians who object to me are unreflecting, declamatory, and inconsistent ? And ought I to feel support on ascertaining that other Christians, cautious, coherent, and highly intelligent, coincide with me ?

*T.* Coincidences, such as these, would certainly disincline you from wavering.

*P.* There are epochs in the world's history, when it has behoved a man to stand almost alone. The first effort to dispel a prevailing superstition, to promulgate a new truth, may be the work of a single man—not merely unsupported, but opposed—not merely unfriended, but persecuted—of a Galileo, a Locke, a Clarkson. His strength must be from within, from the love of truth and the sense of duty. Were men like these opposed and denounced by Christians ?

*T.* They were. There is no denying it.

*P.* Were they right in resisting their Christian persecutors ?

*T.* That they were is now disputed by nobody—by nobody, at least, who has made himself acquainted with the evidences and reasonings by which they subverted the false doctrines accepted as truths before their time, and the inhuman practices founded upon them.

*P.* Then, have we not the Christians of former days in collision with the Christians of our days ?

*T.* So it appears.

*P.* Compared with these great men of the past, am I not greatly favoured? Have I not a few Christians with me, although many are against me?

*T.* You have.

*P.* And is the question of truth to be put to the vote, and decided by the majority?

*T.* That would not do.

*P.* But if I stood alone?

*T.* You should, nevertheless, act according to your own convictions. But for such determination, displayed even in martyrdom, we should not be what we are.

*P.* You have not adverted, perhaps, to an admission which you have made,—an admission which you might wish to retract. Are there several Christianities, or only one Christianity?

*T.* We are not aware of any admission of ours that can justify such a question.

*P.* I thought I understood you to approve and to admire the conduct of those great men who, standing alone, controverted, and ultimately subverted, Christianity, as interpreted up to their time?

*T.* Surely the great men, to whom we owe so much of our enlightenment, have never before been represented as subverters of Christianity?

*P.* You forget. The Christians whom they opposed and offended, and who were the accepted exponents of Christianity, so represented them; that is to say, they represented them as doing a work which, if successful, would subvert Christianity; and they did succeed.

*T.* We will not shirk your question. We do not hesitate to affirm that there is only one Christianity founded upon the Gospels.

*P.* But did you not say that Christians of the present day are utterly at variance with Christians of former days? And if so, can they draw their contradictory judgments from one common invariable Christianity?

*T.* The Christianity is the same, unaltered; but it is interpreted differently.

*P.* As you explain the matter, it seems, to use a pointed expression, which, probably, you have heard before, that "People bring to the Bible a great part of what they find in it." If some stranger were to come among us, for the purpose of studying our doings, past and present, not our sayings, taking it for granted that our doings—those doings which have been sanctioned and abetted by the government and the prevailing public opinion of the day, were the manifestations of our religion, might he not fancy that our religion had been perpetually on the shift, and is now so completely changed from what it was, that, to call it by the same name would wear the appearance of a juggle,—“a mockery, a delusion, and a snare”?

*T.* We never heard religion treated in this manner before. We were not prepared for the kind of discussion into which you are leading us.

*P.* Ought you not rather to say, into which you are leading yourselves? A little reflection will convince you that I am doing no more than calling your attention to the inferences that must be drawn from your own statements of fact. Upon so serious a subject you ought not to be taken unprepared. From your own admissions deductions are drawn, from which you see no escape. Nevertheless, they surprise, they stagger; I might say, they alarm you. Your admissions may have been incautiously made. You might like to withdraw them. Shall we run over together some of the more striking events of the latter half of the Christian era, and examine them separately, as practical exponents of religious belief?

*T.* We will gladly join in such an examination. It will give us time for consideration, and will supply material for testing the propriety of admissions, which, to judge by the inferences drawn from them, may require qualification.

*P.* Before we enter upon it, let us have a clear understanding as to what we are agreed upon. Is it your opinion



that the Christian religion, as now professed, is the same religion that it was in the beginning?

*T.* It cannot be otherwise. It is founded on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, which are the records and expositions of Christ's life and teachings.

*P.* Are we, then, to accept the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles as expositions of the Christian religion, and that these, as recorded, have undergone no change during the period from which we are to draw our examples of Christian conduct?

*T.* Yes. We are conscious, of course, of the variety of interpretation, and of the changes of interpretation, among several denominations of Christians; but all confess to drawing their inspirations from one common unaltered source,—the Holy Bible.

*P.* The examination in which you are desirous of engaging is to ascertain, amid the more striking events posterior to the spread of Christianity, what varieties of conduct, if any, have been accepted and sanctioned, as in direct harmony with, or condemned, as in direct opposition to, a religion which has undergone no change?

*T.* We ought to be ashamed to shrink from such an examination. We will, therefore, thankfully take advantage of your offer to conduct it.

*P.* I shall do no more than place before you, *seriatim*, some of the great events recorded in history, and invite you to pronounce judgment upon them, as they bear upon the question under consideration. We cannot do better than begin with the Crusades. The mere mention of the events will suffice for our purpose; the salient points in them being familiar to us all. What, then, shall we say of the Crusades? Were they, or were they not, justified and promoted by those who, at the time, were the recognised expounders of Christian doctrine?

*T.* They certainly were.

*P.* It can hardly be doubted, if the same views of Christian duty deducible from Christian doctrine prevailed generally at the present time throughout Christendom, that it would be

easy enough for the united Christians to expel the Mahomedans from Palestine and maintain possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre. Why, then, is not that work done? Why is it not even thought of?

*T.* It would be discreditable to suppose that modern Christians, with such overwhelming means as they have at their disposal, could be holding back from the undertaking for any other reason than that they considered it would be at variance with Christian conduct—with the letter and spirit of Christianity.

*P.* Have not Christian forces been lately transported to those regions?

*T.* They have.

*P.* And do you know with what purpose?

*T.* We can hardly speak confidently upon what has been the subject of so many conflicting statements. We incline to think that the expedition was sanctioned by the principal Christian powers, with the hope of putting a stop to the barbarous massacre of a Christian by a Mahomedan population, and of inflicting punishment upon the more prominent abettors and perpetrators of the atrocities.

*P.* Was there any intention of extirpating the Mahomedan population, or of driving them from the land?

*T.* So far from that, the Christian force was instructed to act in conjunction with that of the Mahomedan government to aid it in asserting its authority over a turbulent, savage, and superstitious people which had set its rule at defiance.

*P.* And what has been the result of this expedition, so far as you know?

*T.* The united Christian and Mahomedan forces put a stop, at least for a time, to the massacre of one barbarous tribe by another, the Mahomedans on that occasion happening to be the stronger.

*P.* And what has been the measure of punishment dealt out by the Christian powers to the offending Mahomedans who, as being the stronger, may be presumed to have been the greater culprits?

" After they had co-operated with the Mahomedans to vindicate the supremacy of the law, they had no little difficulty in saving the disarmed Mahomedans from massacre by the Christians who, in their turn, became the stronger party. It was demanded officially that the Christian bishops of Lebanon actually sanctioned a demand for the punishment by death, or of the castrating of more than 2,000 out of 8,000 males.

" The contrast between good and bad, humane and inhuman, was not furnished by Christian and Mahomedan, separately, but by one class compared with another in each.

" We certainly would not attempt to pass off the Christians of Lebanon as examples of the beneficial influences of Christianity. It is said that the Mahomedan soldiers have great difficulty in preventing hostile sects of Christians from tearing one another to pieces over the tomb of our Saviour in Jerusalem.

" The Christians of Lebanon may be considered as types of a species of man nearly extinct, species of Christians in Europe. Would you like to see efforts made to transplant such our kind into Christianity with the cedars of Lebanon?

" No, for we are convinced that they would be neither persecuted nor useful.

" I will now for my second example the almost universal practice throughout Christendom in the middle ages, among the various sects into which Christians split themselves up, of persecuting—not against those whom they all agreed in denouncing as pagans, heathens, and infidels, but against one another. Each and in its turn, as the power came into its hands, persecuted other sects, reserving as the victims of its bitterest animosity those who seceded from the Church in which they were born, as distinguished from those born of members of a dissenting Church. Fine and imprisonment were the mildest of the penalties inflicted upon those who ventured to exercise their own judgments, and to let it be known that they thought for themselves. Death and, worse than death, mutilation, torture, and ruin of families, were not considered punishments

too severe for heretics. If we except the protests and remonstrances of the sect under persecution, itself ready to turn persecutor on the first opportunity, may we not say that the persecuting of fellow Christians on the ground of dissent from subordinate doctrines of their common Christianity was held by the recognized expounders of Christian doctrine to be in perfect harmony with the Christian religion?

*T.* It is hardly fair, we think, to call upon us to answer this question without allowing us to discriminate between sects who have persecuted and others who have not. Our Protestant Church has always been distinguished by its tolerant spirit.

*P.* I wish you to compare one epoch with another, and should be sorry to lead you to impute the deeds of one church of Christians to another, especially when you seem ready to prejudge those deeds as discreditable, although they were held to be highly religious at the time when they were performed. But are you aware in whose reign the last fire in Smithfield was lighted, who was the victim, and who was the bishop at whose instance he was condemned to the stake? Are you aware under the influence of which church religious persecution was clung to in this country, till wrenched, so to say, from the hands of its ministers? Are you aware, among what class of the community were to be found the most acrimonious, the most unyielding opponents of Catholic emancipation and of the removal from Dissenters of civil disabilities on account of their dissent?

*T.* We must yield to your mode of putting the question, and there is no avoiding the admission that persecution for differences of opinion—for what was characterized as heresy and schism, was held in former days to be conduct perfectly in accordance with Christian doctrine.

*P.* Making allowance for those pitiable creatures who, in all ages, think that a pertinacious adherence to the errors of their fathers is more agreeable to the God of their idolatry than a love of truth, is persecution or the infliction of penalty or disability on the ground of heresy, schism, or infidelity, held by

the recognized expounders of Christianity in our days to be at variance or in harmony with Christian doctrine ?

*T.* Happily, we may say at variance, making the allowance mentioned by you, and also bearing in mind that the retention of obsolete forms of expression in books of so-called devotion, and which are repeated from mere force of habit, is no evidence of their having any counterpart in the minds of people who show an utter contempt for them in their conduct.

*P.* The slave-trade and slavery will form an apt example on which to found our third comparison of Christian conduct at different epochs. Till within these last thirty years, men with skins differently coloured to our own were held as slaves, and treated much as we treat cattle. Till within these sixty years, the fitting out of vessels to proceed from this country to carry off negroes from the coast of Africa to the West India colonies, there to be made to work on the plantations, was not only permitted, it was encouraged by the government. At that time, at all events, be it remembered, we had a Christian legislature. Even the ex-Lord Chancellor Chelmsford will not deny that. For when he propounded that the admission of Jews into Parliament would unchristianize the legislature, so dreadful a calamity could befall none but a Christian legislature. Our House of Commons is upheld in its Christianity by a Christian chaplain ; and the other branch of the legislature—the House of Lords, glories in a bench of Christian bishops. The facts are indisputable. Slavery and the slave trade were sanctioned and encouraged by a Christian government. But about eighty years ago the voice of one man, Thomas Clarkson, arose, calling upon the nation, of which he was but one, to free themselves from the stain—the infamy—the sin of slavery. He is now esteemed to have been a good Christian. But in his exposition of Christianity he at first stood almost alone, and was looked upon as a blind zealot—an unreasoning fanatic. After many years of effort he brought the House of Commons over to his views. The House of Lords, aided by the bench of bishops, continued to withstand for some time the urgent

appeals that were made to them. But at last the slave trade was abolished. It required another struggle of thirty years to persuade the legislature to abolish slavery in every part of the world subject to the British dominion. The question which we have to put in the face of these facts is : Were the horrible slave trade and the institution of slavery held to be quite conformable to the letter and spirit of Christianity less than a century ago ?

*T.* They certainly were ; and the recognized expounders of Christianity adhered to their faith with the tenacity, if not with the self-devotion, of martyrs.

*P.* To engage in the slave trade is now constituted a crime, and slavery has ceased throughout the British dominions. The acts accomplishing this change were passed before the legislature was unchristianized. And is there a Christian minister in the kingdom who would now be disposed to propound that the slave trade and slavery were not in direct opposition, in utter defiance of the letter and spirit of Christianity ? or, if so disposed, would he be allowed to propound his doctrines in his ministerial capacity ?

*T.* We have reason to be thankful for the happy change which has come over the people of this country.

*P.* Happy, indeed, for across the Atlantic a community as numerous as our own, boasting too of its Christianity, holds on pertinaciously to its slaves,—its divines, meanwhile, at issue with one another whether slavery be in opposition to, or in harmony with, Christianity. But we must not lose sight of the question which we have to determine. On a matter so important as whether it be unchristian or not to kidnap or steal and hold slaves, has there been a complete reversal of judgment within the century among recognized expounders of Christianity ?

*T.* There has, unless altered circumstances might justify us in maintaining that one unchanging Christian doctrine may lead to the condemnation of conduct which had previously been approved.

T. The fact of the altered judgment is what we have to deal with just now. This you allow to be indisputable. Be cautious, however, in permitting the plea of altered circumstances to upset your judgments upon what constitutes Christian conduct. Looking back upon past times, assisted by our increased intelligence, we can easily understand how former circumstances of ignorance, poverty, and cupidity, led men into cruelties, religious persecution, and slave stealing and holding, although our present circumstances of improved intelligence have convinced us that wealth may be acquired, opinions corrected, and services obtained most efficiently without sacrificing humanity; and that, if they could not, the sacrifice of humanity would not be thereby justified. The circumstances of former times may account for former conduct, and yet make no alteration in our judgment, when we are called upon to decide whether that conduct ought to be imitated or departed from—to be approved as good and religious, or reprehended as bad and irreligious.

T. Surely you would not contend that, in estimating the character and conduct of men in past times, no allowance ought to be made for the circumstances in which they were placed?

P. I would contend for nothing so unreasonable. Character has to be judged by two standards; acts by one only. Acts are good or bad according as they tend to promote or disturb well-being; and character is good or bad according as it inclines to good or bad acts or conduct. But it would be unfair and ungenerous, in judging the characters of former men, not to take into account the state of the society in which they had to act, and whose prejudices, superstitions, morals, and manners, they could scarcely fail to share.

T. And in spite of the unaltered text, according to you, men modify their notions of religious conduct, and it may be hoped, for the better. We ought not to forget, however, because we are emancipated from the illusion that there are such sins as witchcraft and heresy, that most people were more or less slaves to that illusion, when Christian judges condemned their

fellow-creatures to the stake and gallows as heretics and witches.

*P.* The marked difference of skin in the negroes may be mentioned as one of the accidental circumstances which impeded the deliverance of their race from slavery in the British dominions, and continues to prolong slavery in the United States. The darkness of their skins might be supposed to have imparted a tinge of blackness to white Christianity, were it not that treatment scarcely less atrocious was to be observed in the conduct of white to white. You are aware, doubtless, of the means by which sailors used to be obtained for the navy less than fifty years ago. The cat, at the command of the captain of a man-of-war, was a much more terrible instrument of torture than the whip in the hand of a negro-driver. As, besides the sanction of the law, every man-of-war had its chaplain, can we say that naval discipline, as it existed at that time, was considered to be irreconcilable with conduct becoming believers in the Christian religion?

*T.* We never heard that the walls of our churches and chapels, or of the House of Lords, rung with denunciations of any supposed violations of Christian precept in the barbarities recorded in every man-of-war's log-book.

*P.* Now-a-days our ships are manned by volunteers. Pains have been taken to make our ships healthy and comfortable places of abode. Every man-of-war has its school and library. Nevertheless, we still hear of difficulties in manning the navy. Many expedients have been suggested; but nobody proposes to recur to impressment. And why?

*T.* Evidently because it would be considered to be at variance with the letter and spirit of Christianity as now interpreted.

*P.* The frequent recurrence of duels, although steadily on the decline, till a few years ago, when they seemed to die out of themselves, may be made use of to test how far judgments concerning Christian conduct have been altered. It is notorious that scarcely an eminent statesman of the past generation



can be mentioned who had not fought his duel. It is nowhere recorded that divines ever refused to accept bishoprics or other church preferment from the hands of statesmen who had been thus engaged. Would they not have shrunk from the pollution, had they conceived duelling to be derogatory to the character of a Christian ?

T'. The inference to be drawn is that duelling was not formerly held to be a violation of the precepts of Christianity by its recognized expounders ; whereas now, if such an expression may be used, we have outgrown the practice, and also the wish to twist and torture Christianity, so as to reduce it to a level with human folly and brutality, as exemplified in duelling.

P'. There is no Christian people, even in this, the nineteenth century, of whom it must not be said, however shameful it may be to have to make the confession, that large masses of them are so ignorant as not even to have a thought about religion. In former days, the proportion of the uninstructed was still larger. We will exclude the uninstructed from the comparison which I would now invite you to make for the purpose of noting some other changes of opinion in regard to what constitutes Christian conduct. We will confine ourselves to the instructed classes. And if we wish to ascertain whether any changes of interpretation—and, if so, what changes—have been exemplified in the conduct of instructed Christians, from which class among them may we most reasonably expect assistance in order to arrive at a right conclusion ?

T'. We would select the ministers of religion, since they not only devote as much time and labour as any other class to obtain instruction ; but special pains are taken to give them religious instruction in its completest form.

P'. Society being split up, as we have already observed, into many sects of Christians, which among them all might be fairly presumed to furnish the brightest examples of Christian conduct in its ministers ?

T. The Church of England.

*P.* And of all the ministers of the Church of England, to whom might we appeal with the fullest security for specimens of the highest excellence of conduct, in proof of the elevating influence of Christian doctrine faithfully interpreted, devoutly received, and conscientiously acted up to ?

*T.* We need not hesitate to adduce the bishops as such specimens, since they are selected by the head of the Church, out of the whole number of clergymen, as those supposed to be best fitted by their learning, piety, and deportment to cherish and maintain a pure spirit of Christianity in the clerical body, whose duty it is to infuse a like spirit into their flocks.

*P.* Have the bishops large incomes appropriated to them, and a power of disposal over many smaller incomes trusted to them, as a means of better qualifying them to instruct and improve the whole Christian community ?

*T.* They still have large incomes, although not so large as they had some years ago. And the power of dispensing clerical incomes is shared with them by many private individuals, and by the Crown, and by officials under the Crown.

*P.* How has it happened that the incomes of bishops are smaller now than they were formerly ?

*T.* They were re-adjusted by Act of Parliament, and the number of bishops was increased to meet the wants of an increasing population. Besides, the Church property out of which bishops' incomes are derived was withdrawn from their control.

*P.* Why was this done ?

*T.* Partly, we believe, because the property was thought to be not so well managed as it might be, and partly because some of the bishops were suspected of appropriating to their own private uses that which was destined by religion, if not assigned by legislation, to Church purposes.

*P.* Do the bishops of the present day follow the practice of their predecessors in disposing of Church livings ?

*T.* Not exactly. The son, or son-in-law, or nephew of a

bishop may obtain a preference over other candidates for Church preferment; but he cannot, as formerly, absorb, even with a bishop's consent, the emoluments of several cures, while he performs the duties of none. The shock that was lately felt throughout this Christian community by what was mildly called an indecorous use of Church patronage by a bishop, shows that acts considered in former days of such ordinary occurrence among the highest Gospel authorities as to pass unnoticed, can no longer be tolerated. Some are forbidden by law. The prevention of others not forbidden by law is confided to the dignitaries of the Church, who, of all men, might be considered best to understand Gospel precepts, and best disposed to act up to them.

*P.* Are we to conclude that in the administration of property intended to be appropriated to the cure of souls, bishops of former days executed their trusts in a way which would now be universally condemned, and that the improved performance of the trusts has been provided for, partly by committing them to other hands, and partly by a clearer perception of Gospel truths and a stricter conformity of conduct to them?

*T.* We readily admit that bishops of the present day have a clearer perception of the duties required of them than their predecessors.

*P.* Did not their predecessors, equally with themselves, derive their notions of duty from the Bible?

*T.* They may both be presumed to have drawn their notions of duty from the same fountain of inspiration.

*P.* Is there, think you, a growing disposition among the dignitaries of the Church to consider the incomes and power and privileges conferred upon them as trusts for the furtherance of good and holy living in their dioceses?

*T.* We think there is.

*P.* In this country there is much property, besides Church property, held in trust. How are the trustees expected to administer it?

*T.* They are bound to comply with the conditions of the

trusts. They are liable to the consequences of inattention to their duties as trustees; and appropriations of trust property to the private purposes of the trustees are crimes.

*P.* Are misappropriations of property and power, evidently intended to be used for the promotion of good and holy living, also looked upon as crimes?

*T.* As much as any acts can be which are not forbidden by law. They are among the bad acts which are left to be suppressed by the religious sense of the community. No demonstrations of piety, now-a-days, can screen the culprit who commits them from the indignation of a public daily becoming more capable of detecting an unfaithful shepherd, clothed though he be in episcopal garments, and lodged in an episcopal palace.

*P.* May we, then, class modern episcopal conduct among the blessings derived from a Gospel which heretofore has been made the screen for every form of breach of trust that legal remissness and a blind reliance on presumed sanctity rendered possible?

*T.* We are not quite sure that you do not somewhat exaggerate the virtues of the present, and the vices of past bishops. Nevertheless, we admit the improvement, although, as it seems to us, there is great room for more.

*P.* The changes of "Christian conduct," that being but a shorter expression for "conduct of reputed Christians," in regard to many other matters, are quite as striking as those already cited. The holding and expending of incomes attached to the performance of clerical duties, and not even pretending to perform them, a pertinacious adherence to criminal laws so cruel that juries could not be brought to participate in the iniquity of enforcing them, and to a system of procedure in civil laws so dear that justice was unapproachable by the masses—were once as acceptable among Christians as they now appear abominable to them. We may, however, close here our references to the past. Enough has been adduced to enable us to answer the questions already put. I will restate them.

The consequences which the answers involve are sufficiently mighty to justify repetition—to demand the most cautious and deliberate treatment. Are the doctrines of Christianity, drawn as they are from the Bible, so far as words spoken, written, translated and printed are concerned, the same as they were 1000 years ago?

*T.* They are : about that there are not two opinions.

*P.* Are they also the same as exemplified in human conduct?

*T.* We must confess that they are not.

*P.* As your form of assent implies something like a reluctance to give it, may I ask if you would prefer that the expositions of Christianity, as exemplified in conduct years ago, had remained unchanged to this day?

*T.* You should not be so unmerciful to us. Of course we would not.

*P.* Am I dealing rigidly by you, or are you wincing under self-conviction? Should I be acting honestly if I neglected to put together your own admissions, and so to exhibit them to you as to compel you to retract and amend whatever had been incautiously admitted, to supply what might have been overlooked, and to leave you with a firmer faith in that which no questioning had been able to shake?

*T.* We may wince a little occasionally, but we will not be discouraged from pursuing our investigations; and you shall not find us ungrateful for the help which we are receiving from you.

*P.* Are we agreed, then, that the doctrines of Christianity, as interpreted by modern intelligence and exemplified in modern conduct, are a great improvement upon the same doctrines as interpreted and exemplified in the past?

*T.* We are agreed. They are a great improvement.

*P.* What would our present state be if the energetic, intelligent, and courageous individuals to whom we are indebted for these blessed improvements had been driven from their work by the "good Christians" of their times?

*T.* It is too horrible to think of. We seem hardly conscious

how deeply we are indebted to them for the perseverance with which they sought, the zeal with which they promulgated, and the courage with which they defended truth, unacceptable though it was to those who claimed to have a monopoly of Christianity.

*P.* Will you not agree with me that it would be a most unprofitable proceeding for us to store up all these occurrences in our memories ; to be at some pains with our understandings to come to a righteous judgment upon them ; and then to act as if the events which we have been examining had never occurred, or as if our verdict upon them had never been given ?

*T.* That would, indeed, be a weakness—an indifference to truth—a regardlessness of conduct—which it may reasonably be hoped we shall not be guilty of.

## ON PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

*T.* We are not quite satisfied with some of the conclusions that we have as it were drifted into, although we cannot exactly say how they were to have been avoided. Your resolution not to judge of people's religion by their professions, but to insist on procuring evidence of their conduct, does not seem unreasonable, and yet it appears to us that professions ought not to be entirely overlooked.

*P.* Neither would I omit to pay that attention to professions which is their due; but I would avoid attaching more weight to them than they deserve. I think you will agree with me that the habitual utterance of professions or confessions of faith, to which there is not the remotest thought or intention of making conduct conform, is degrading religion to the merest verbiage.

*T.* On the other hand, should not some allowance be made for human infirmity? Are we not all obliged to admit that we have in the course of our lives been led into doing many things that we cannot justify, and of which we deeply repent? Do not our prayers to be kept out of temptation imply our liability to commit acts which we know to be forbidden by our religion?

*P.* Is it not possible to distinguish between those professions of faith which apparently have no influence on conduct, and those which are never disregarded in conduct, without bringing down on the sinner his own self-reproaches, or, more certainly, the condemnation of society?

*T.* We think there is room for some such distinction; although we cannot say that we are prepared to draw one.

*P.* It is only after earnest, conscientious thought has been devoted to these subjects that we discern how much we have to learn—how much we have been taking for granted, in the most careless and slovenly fashion—how habitually we have been treating religious profession as a matter of little moment. You may be helped to draw the distinction, for which you see room, by selecting some examples of both kinds of religious profession—those all but universally regarded, and those which, if not all but universally disregarded, are made with such frivolity and thoughtlessness as to imply an utter contempt for the words to which utterance is given. Do you not think that the Ten Commandments offer examples of religious precepts suitable for an examination of this kind?

*T.* They ought not; for if any one portion of our religious creed ought to be entirely beyond the reach of either misconception or disregard, we should look for it in that which is supposed to contain direct applications of religion to conduct,—positive injunctions, admitting of no neglect or evasion.

*P.* Nevertheless, your experience of life ought to prevent your feeling confident that they do not. A few questions upon them will soon settle the construction that has been placed upon this portion of religion, as exemplified in daily conduct. What may we say of the commandment, "Thou shalt do no murder"?

*T.* In regard to that commandment, at all events, people's professions and conduct harmonize. It seldom happens, on those rare occasions when murder has been committed, that the culprit does not admit murder to be a sin, while he attempts to establish his innocence; and, when conviction has taken place, the circumstances which led to the crime are generally laid bare—such as, desire of revenge, drunkenness, want of wealth and lack of industry to earn it, and other temptations beyond the power of his ill-regulated nature to resist. There can be no doubt that, while this commandment is listened to



with the ears, and repeated by the lips, it is intended to be obeyed in conduct.

I'. Would similar remarks be equally applicable to the commandments, "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"?

T'. Yes.

I'. Would they also apply to, "Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath-day"?

T'. This commandment, it must be admitted, is treated in a manner which might lead to the inference that its divine origin was denied; since the class of people who allow themselves the liberty of obeying it just so far as it does not interfere with their pleasure and convenience, while they make a great show of respect for the words, is held to be exemplary and religious.

I'. Is not the free and easy manner in which this commandment is made to accommodate itself to fashion and convenience, instead of troubling fashion and convenience to give way to the commandment, an example of the aptitude, before noted, for finding in Scripture what is taken into it? We can readily judge whether a man break one of the three commandments already cited; but who can tell whether a man be observing or breaking this?

T'. You remind us of an observation, which struck us forcibly at the time,—that it was impossible to judge how a man observed the Sabbath, unless it was known how he conducted himself on the other days in the week. We freely admit that no desecration of the Sabbath can be worse than that of a display of abstinence from particular kinds of work by a thoroughly bad man.

I'. Are you not in danger of becoming obnoxious to some of your Christian friends, who are more given to condemn men as irreligious because they do not conform to their mode of observing the Sabbath, than to infer that they desecrate the Sabbath by their ill-conduct on the week-days?

T'. We would not be understood to sanction a disregard for

forms; but we do not hesitate to admit that it is most revolting to attempt to make of them substitutes for good conduct, or screens for bad conduct.

*P.* In the days of my youth it happened to me to be put upon my defence by one of your self-constituted saints. I had been invited, on a Sunday, to a friend's country house, about ten miles from London. Glad of an opportunity for exercise and air free from smoke, the day being fine, I sauntered down with a pleasant companion, so as to arrive soon after morning service. We had not been long there, chatting over luncheon, before another visitor made his appearance. When he heard me say that I had walked from town, he remarked that I must have walked very fast. "Quite the reverse," I replied; "I started early, on purpose to breathe the balmy air of this glorious day at my leisure." "Then," said he, "you have not been to church?" I readily admitted that I had not; and straightway he made known to me how greatly he disapproved my neglect of public worship. I knew that he had not come so great a distance as I had; but still it appeared to me that he could hardly have walked from his house since church-time; and a remark to this effect brought forth the explanation that he had ridden, not walked, over. "Now," said I, "let us appeal to our excellent host, let him be the judge which of us is the greater sinner—I, who have disregarded no commandment, or you, who have made your horse labour on the Sabbath-day." My reprover's countenance assumed an expression of mixed annoyance and anger at this unexpected retort, and I could not refrain from suggesting as a justification of what he had done, that perhaps it was pleasure, rather than work, for his horse to carry so good a Christian. Let us pass on to another commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

*T.* We freely confess, in regard to the Commandments, that although we have learned to repeat them accurately, we have not been accustomed to examine them critically. We can neither justify the omission, nor excuse those who blinded us

to it. We are not exactly prepared to say what is taking the name of the Lord in vain. Of late years many forms of oath have been abolished as irreverential, which were formerly enforced. There is a strong contention now, that certain forms of prayer, still persisted in, are a breach of this commandment.

*P.* If any meaning is to be attached to this commandment, the two most obvious ways of sinning against it are—1. To pray for things impossible, or so improbable as not to be seriously expected; and, 2. So to join in prayers as though no effect were to be expected from them, in regard to things both possible and probable. I will say nothing of forms of prayer which characterize the Almighty as otherwise than the perfection of wisdom and goodness; for they do worse than take His name in vain—they give Him a bad name. Have you ever been present at the reading of prayers in the two Houses of Parliament, or at our two Universities, and seen and reflected upon the reverence there shown for the Lord's name?

*T.* According to you, it would be easier to obey that commandment by refraining from prayer altogether, than by joining in most forms of worship.

*P.* You will not deny that a devout man had better keep silence than appeal to the Lord, whether for thanksgiving or prayer, in terms disparaging to His high attributes. But I do not ask you to adopt my opinions, real or supposed. I would rather caution you against adopting any till after careful consideration. The last commandment, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," &c., suggests matter for serious reflection to one who would neither harden a dull conscience nor wound a susceptible one, while striving to enlighten its darkness.

*T.* Are you among those who hold it to be impossible to keep this commandment?

*P.* Nay, it is for you to consider how it is kept, and to work out for your own guidance the land-marks which, in your dealings with others, separate the legitimate desire for possession from that ill-regulated craving which is expressed by "covet."

Studies of the Commandments in this spirit will lead you to turn a deaf ear to that empty, turgid declamation, which, while it connives at an unbridled hankering in some after others' possessions—especially possessions meant to be applied to public purposes—cruelly terrifies and disturbs many who are striving diligently to earn a sufficiency for their families.

*T.* You have supplied us with matter for deep and long meditation. We are bound to admit that written records, by themselves, do not furnish proof sufficient to enable us to judge of a people's religion. We must know what their conduct is in conjunction with their professions,—not that conduct which the respectable portions of society unanimously condemn, but that conduct which the respectable classes approve and encourage.

*P.* Our main reliance in forming a judgment of people's religion, must be on the knowledge that we have been able to obtain of their conduct. Their professions of faith are not to be lost sight of. They may assist us to include conscientiousness in the catalogue of their virtues, or force us to add hypocrisy to their other vices. Where conduct and profession are at variance, we shall have to consider whether the conduct is generally condemned—accounted for, though it be, by that which you have characterized as an infirmity of our nature—or whether it is generally practised, the variance being disregarded, and the conduct approved. How deeply rooted the habit may be of repeating words, without a thought of attaching a meaning to them, or of acting in manifest contradiction to the words, as ordinarily construed, is more easily exemplified in past than in present conduct; better gibbeted in the form of slave catching and holding, heretic and witch burning, duelling and privateering, than in child-neglect, luxurious indulgence in the midst of destitution, and in the vices out of which grow the social evil: the former being abjured, the latter tolerated by this generation, to which the appeal has to be made. The man who would attempt to organize a crusade against the latter must be prepared for laughter and contempt

from the very sinners. He could not disturb them sufficiently, so strong is their hold on society, to rouse them to anger.

*T.* We hope, nevertheless, that you will be persuaded to continue into our own times, if only for our edification, those inquiries which have thrown so much light upon the bearing of religion upon conduct in the past.

*P.* You are aware, I make no doubt, that there are people among us who are strongly convinced—and they are by no means shy of producing their reasons for these convictions—that the destitution prevailing so widely around us might be greatly diminished, and perhaps, in time, be extirpated altogether.

*T.* We are aware of that; and we confess that we have of late been drawn very much towards these views ourselves.

*P.* Will it take you by surprise—will it be listened to as something strange and new, if I whisper in your ears that there are people who call themselves “Christians,” with friends and hangers-on, who prefix “good” to “Christians,” and give no offence in so doing; people so called, I say, who denounce these views as wild, visionary, and unchristian?

*T.* There are such, we admit, but it is to be hoped that they are not very numerous.

*P.* More numerous than you suppose; but my hope is that they are less formidable than numerous. We will pass on from convictions to the measures taken to enforce them in practice—to act up to them. The people to whom I allude are not mere dreamers. They have not only stated what their convictions are, and on what they are grounded, but they have set forth the means by which the object proclaimed—the great diminution—the all but extinction of destitution, may be attained. Can you conceive any opposition, whatever may be its kind, and under whatever name disguised, that ought to deter these men from persevering in what they hold to be a holy work?

*T.* Certainly not.

*P.* To you the haunts of poverty and wretchedness are not

unknown, and the causes of destitution are not quite a mystery. Can you tell me whence the means, first for relieving, then for preventing, this misery are to be obtained ?

*T.* They can only come from the rich ; that is, from people who have wealth to spare after they have made provision for the reasonable Christian wants of their own households.

*P.* Can you see your way to such an application of the superfluous wealth of the rich, as might gradually but effectually reduce suffering, from want, within very narrow limits ?

*T.* We can ; and that, too, while keenly alive to the danger from a misapplication of this wealth, which might be made to aggravate suffering from destitution, both in extent and intensity.

*P.* Can you suggest any method of abolishing or even of greatly diminishing destitution, and of providing for its relief meanwhile, in which contributions from superfluous wealth can be dispensed with ?

*T.* That certainly is beyond our power, and we should think beyond anybody's power.

*P.* The question now before us has assumed this form :—There are people, and you seem inclined to enlist among them, who are convinced of the possibility of greatly diminishing the extent of suffering from want, and who know of no method of accomplishing this work without the command and judicious application of the superfluous wealth in possession of the rich. Ought they to omit any effort to persuade the rich that the most sacred, the most religious of purposes, before the luxuries of furniture, equipage, and dress, to which they can devote their superfluous wealth, is to assist in organizing and arming the crusade now projected, not against Saracens and infidels, but against destitution, vice, and misery ?

*T.* Nothing ought to induce them to relax their efforts, or to deter those of them, if there be any, who are rich, from setting the example of so applying their own wealth.

*P.* As we have abundance of rich men among us to whom these thoughts would appear strange, and utterly subversive of all established usage, and hence of all religion ; who would



but by a consideration of the probable consequences of introducing your teaching into schools, or of continuing to exclude it.

P. As you have frequently attended my classes, I need not take up your time by dwelling at any length upon what my lessons consist of, or by attempting explanations of what I am aiming at. My position is briefly this:—I have observed, on examining the courses of lessons in many of our schools, a general omission of anything like systematic instruction in the method of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, wise and foolish conduct; and of inducing to the practice of that which has been recognized to be right, good, and wise conduct. I have been deeply impressed with the fatal consequences that must result from this omission, not only through the want of capacity for self-guidance, but through thoughtlessness and misapprehension as to the duty of self-discipline. It has appeared to me that, so long as this omission remained unrectified, it would be irrational to expect any sensible diminution in the extent of that destitution, for the relief of which we are so urgently implored every day of our lives. Would it not have been base in me to remain torpid and inactive with such views in my head, and to make no attempt to give publicity to them, and to reduce them to practice?

T. It would; for it is allowable to express how low our estimate would be of any man, if he were the very reverse of what he is.

P. Accepting your expressions of encouragement and approval in part compensation for the reproaches which I have had to endure, I will ask whether you think the work chalked out for the man who would attempt to supply the omission referred to, was about enough to occupy the attention of one who did not wish to fritter away his time and energies, by undertaking more than he could possibly accomplish?

T. Quite enough, even with the assistance of all the allies and auxiliaries who might unite their forces to his.

P. I am not a schoolmaster. If I were, it would be my duty to see that my boys, to the best of my ability, and to the



extent of my means and opportunities, should be taught everything needful, to enable them to conduct themselves well as men; to see that nothing was omitted. They who do not like me call me a busy-body. I call myself an assistant-teacher, willing to converse with schoolmasters, as I am conversing with you; willing to give lessons to their boys, if they like to engage me, as they do sometimes a teacher of drawing, of a foreign language, or of music and singing. By way of having a short name for what I teach, suppose I call myself a teacher of social science. I go into a school: I am pleased with the master, and listen to his account of all his trials and difficulties. I find that, in common with most others, he has no notion of the omission to which I am sensitively alive. He is an earnest man, and intelligent, so far as one can be who has been kept in the dark upon the very fundamentals of teaching and training. Ought I to say to him, "Why do you not teach reading, and writing, and arithmetic? Why do you not teach geography, history, mathematics, and mechanics? Or what ought I to say to him?"

*T.* You ought to ask why he does not teach social science; and that, of course, you would not ask until you had made some progress in explaining to him what was meant by social science. You might end by inviting him to converse with you, and by giving a few lessons to his children in his presence.

*P.* All this have I done, and I rejoice in it. But I must not conceal from you how severely I have, at times, been taken to task. On one occasion, through a common friend—not coming in contact with the mighty teacher himself—I was endeavouring to secure that his attention should be called to this omission by his predecessor in the school, of which he had just been elected head-master—he a schoolmaster, scholar, and divine, all in one. His rebuke was as crushing as it was called for: "This Philo can see good in nothing but social science." I need not say, that he and his scholars, so far as they depend upon him, most probably continue strangers to social science.

*T.* We are met in the same way. The principal and teachers

of the training-school out of which we came, profess to be sick of hearing us talk of social science.

*P.* Did you not tell them that sickness sometimes proceeds from weakness of stomach, as well as from unfitness of the food put into it, and that weakness of stomach, again, may be traced to weakness of brain? But, possibly, they may dislike physiology, and would be unable to understand you.

*T.* You are nearer the truth than you imagine; and we have heard people give utterance to the suspicion, that the true reason for their not introducing instruction in social science and physiology into the training college where we were taught, is the ignorance on these subjects of the principal and his staff, which they hope to keep out of sight by the vehemence of their denunciations, as well of the sciences as of the "unchristian" men who are trying to force these sciences upon them.

*P.* And which appears to you the more "unchristian,"—the keeping from children instruction indispensable for their future well-being, or the insisting upon its being imparted to them?

*T.* We are sorry to have to make the confession; but from the time that we first became acquainted with your teaching, and began, little by little, to imitate it in our schools—to the great benefit of the children, and to our own comfort in governing them—our confidence in those who omitted to qualify us for what we are attempting, and who have done their best to deter us from supplying their omissions, has been steadily on the decline.

*P.* I have unintentionally, and perhaps unavoidably, given still greater offence. At first, I directed my efforts to persuade others to admit instruction in social science into schools, such as I found them. Then I gathered around me teachers who were not indisposed to listen to matters recommended by no authority known to them. But this did not satisfy me; was scarcely commensurate with what my position and means demanded of me. I determined to promote the opening of new schools—schools in which the instruction advocated by me should be specially attended to. And here comes the

aggravation of my offence in the eyes of your "good Christians." I am decidedly of opinion that it is unwise, irreverent, sacrilegious, and dangerous, to put the Bible, both the Old and New Testament,—but particularly the former,—as a lesson-book, into the hands of children. Holding this opinion, should I have been justified in allowing the Bible to be made a lesson-book in schools under my control?

*T.* We think not; although we are not without regret at hearing you utter such strong expressions, decidedly in opposition to the feelings of almost all who are engaged in promoting education.

*P.* Nothing short of examining, seriatim, with you, selections of your own making from the Old and New Testament, would enable me to do justice to the grounds of my opinion, which has been formed after the most mature consideration.

*T.* Will you favour us, on some future occasion, by allowing us to have a few conversations with you on this very subject? We don't wish to be at variance with you. We, at all events, are convinced of the fairness which pervades all your teaching, and feel that your fairness cannot depart from you in discussing with us so important a subject as Bible-teaching.

*P.* I will not refuse your request. But I must advert to another point in vindication of my proceedings. The adequate teaching of social science is, in my opinion, essential to religiousness of disposition and conduct, and Bible-lessons, as they are conducted in schools, unfavourable and obstructive to it. I believed that many parents shared in this opinion. Having the means and opportunity, ought I to have denied them access to the instruction which they desired for their children, free from what they held to be likely to damage and mislead them?

*T.* We certainly do not see why they should not, in common with all other parents, be allowed to select, out of all the education open to them for their children, that which they most approved of. And it would have been an unwarrantable deterioration of the good education intended for them, to adulterate

it with what you and they considered to be a noxious ingredient.

*P.* It may be with instruction as with food. One does not detract from the qualities of food suitable for a full-grown man, by pointing out that it is not suitable for children or infants. Nor does one undervalue instruction, evidently addressed to grown-up men, because one objects to its being forced upon children. As milk, which contains the elements of all the tissues of the body, so combined as to be readily digested and assimilated by the infant, is the best nourishment that can be provided for it; while beef and mutton, containing the same elements in a different form, would be damaging rather than nutritious: so religiousness of teaching and training, provided by a schoolmaster well versed in social science, will develop in a child those religious qualities which would be crushed under a course of Bible lessons read and repeated.

*T.* Your views are that, as a course of diet adapted for children, from which many kinds of food are excluded, is best fitted to preserve them to assimilate man's meat, so a course of teaching and training, from which Bible reading and repeating are excluded, is best adapted for preparing them to appreciate, as it deserves, the Bible, reserved for their study as men. We look forward with curiosity to the exposition of some of the reasons which have satisfied you that the Bible is not only unfit, but dangerous to be used as a lesson-book for the instruction of children, in whom it is wished to cultivate religiousness of disposition and conduct.

*P.* There is one very startling fact in the present state of the education-question—one that ought to be most painful for religious men to look at—which has been brought prominently into view by the attempt to force the Bible into schools. I should like to compare notes with you on this subject, to go over it most minutely, before entering upon the statement of my reasons for thinking that the Bible ought to be kept out of the hands of school-children. You must have heard, over and over again, "religious difficulties" pleaded in excuse for the

inadequate provision of education. Can you tell me what is meant by "religious difficulties?"

*T.* We understand by that expression, the differences of opinion among the leaders of the various religious sects, into which Christians have formed themselves.

*P.* Are these (so-called) religious difficulties in the way of educational extension nothing more than dissensions among Christians, or supposed Christians?

*T.* So it seems. The parties who are most actively engaged in the religious controversies mixed up with education, are Churchmen, Roman Catholics, and Dissenters—principally in opposition to one another, but occasionally breaking into convulsive struggles within their several churches; of accord only on one point—their dislike of what is called secularizing education.

*P.* And what is meant by secularizing education?

*T.* Confining education exclusively to imparting intelligence and forming character, so as to induce conduct favourable to general well-being.

*P.* But is not this an indispensable part of religious education?

*T.* Certainly it is. They deny, however, the possibility of giving it, unaccompanied by instruction from the Bible.

*P.* They admit, then, the necessity of giving good secular education?

*T.* They cannot help admitting that; but they say it must be in company with Bible lessons.

*P.* Supposing them to be right, do they not place themselves and, so far as that is possible, religion also, in a false position? Without Bible-lessons, an essential part of religious education might be given universally, or, at all events, much more generally than it is—they assuming the duty of imparting the supplementary Bible-lessons which they deem indispensable. What is their course? They insist that Bible-lessons shall be included in the course of school education, while they cannot agree what their Bible-lessons shall be.

*T.* You are too strong for us.

*P.* Nay ; if there be strength anywhere, it is in the case ; and neither you nor I ought to be satisfied till its truth and justice are clearly set forth. Some portion of its strength may then be imparted to both of us. We are agreed, I think, that a very large number of our children are debarred from education, and a still larger number are receiving a very indifferent education, so far as the secular portion of it is concerned ?

*T.* Quite so.

*P.* And that the secular is essential to the religious portion of the education ?

*T.* From this, also, there is no escape.

*P.* Nevertheless, among the difficulties which impede the extension of education to all children, are some called "religious difficulties ?"

*T.* So it appears.

*P.* Are the people, among whom these difficulties arise, religious people ?

*T.* Certainly.

*P.* Is not the act of preventing the education of children a very bad act ?

*T.* As bad as possible.

*P.* Are bad acts performed by bad or by good people ?

*T.* By bad ; unless the bad acts be unintentional, acts not intended, or the consequences whereof were unperceived.

*P.* Are we to decide that bad acts are always committed either by bad or by ignorant men ?

*T.* We think so.

*P.* If "religious difficulties" be an allowable expression, might we not with equal propriety say, "Christian difficulties," since, in this country, however numerous the sects, each arrogates to itself, and wrings from its neighbours, the right to be called Christian ?

*T.* We see what you are arriving at. Good secular education, an essential part of religious—that is, of Christian—education, is prevented by "Christian difficulties."

P. You have anticipated me. Let us follow out the consequences. The exclusion of children from education is an atrocious act. The men who commit it are bad and ignorant men. And, so far as your "good Christians" are concerned, we must put them down as ignorant men—most ignorant and purblind, since they seem incapable of tracing the destitution, vice, and crime, which they deplore, to the denial of education, caused by their own highly-cultivated Christian unfitness.

T. Are you not bearing with undue severity upon these well-meaning men?

P. I am not bearing upon them at all. I am only placing before you how they have been bearing upon themselves. The idea of pleading "religious difficulties" in extenuation of the most atrocious of delinquencies—neglect of childhood—did originate with me. If there be crimination, it is self-crimination, always severe when proffered unintentionally as a vindication—severest of all when trumpeted as self-landation. Testimony given against one's self, and summed up to guide a jury in forming their verdict, shuts out the possibility of staying its effect by attempting to raise a cry against false witnesses.

T. It must be confessed that the expression, "religious difficulties," was most unhappy. Nevertheless, we cannot help seeing that there are difficulties in the way of extending education to all children.

P. Can these difficulties be aggravated by religion, or by Christianity, properly understood and discreetly followed up in conduct?

T. The office of Christianity is to remove such difficulties; to soften down, not to inflame animosities.

P. As you are familiar with my teachings, you can tell me whether you think, if I were to visit Constantinople, I should be right in going among the children as I do here?

T. You would be doing a good act if they would admit you into their schools.

P. You fear that the "good Mahomedans" would keep me

out. But suppose I met with, here and there, a sensible man among these good Mahomedans who, like you, approving my method of conversing with children, said, "Welcome, enter and co-operate with us in our efforts to make good men of these children." How ought I to begin, think you?

*T.* As we have generally heard you.

*P.* Ought I not to draw forth the Bible from under my cloak, and holding the sacred volume up before their eyes, proclaim that from this Book—from this Book alone—can the rules be learned of "good and holy living"?

*T.* With such an exordium you would not gain a hearing. According as the teachers and children, "good Mahomedans," sympathised or not with your sensible friends, they would bow you out with courteous contempt, or drive you out with indignation.

*P.* In either case the children would be deprived of my lessons. But should I be justified in leaving my Bible at home or keeping it under my cloak?

*T.* More than justified—commanded, we should say, by religion—by Christianity, whose inspirations enjoin you to do all the good you can, and not to shut yourself out from any opportunity of doing it that comes in your way.

*P.* It would suffice according to you, if, having studied the Bible, I poured forth among the children as much of its fruits as they and their parents were, in my judgment, willing to receive and capable of digesting and assimilating?

*T.* And it would be insanity to try to force upon them a much larger quantity of its fruits, in a form sure to be rejected with loathing.

*P.* Are you not unconsciously yielding to my presumed peculiarities, or as your "good Christian" friends might say, to my infirmities, my heresy, my infidelity? Would you act in this way if you were at Constantinople?

*T.* We should be irreligious and unchristian if we did not.

*P.* If you could be spared at home, I should be glad to see you appointed to the "Educational Council" in the Govern-



ment of British India. You have faith enough to trust the possibility of teaching in the spirit of the Gospel, as we did of old before the Gospel was written; and sense enough to know that the written Gospel may be thrust upon those period to receive it in a way to secure its rejection, and perhaps the ruin of it also—or, what is worse, to risk its desecration that there is abundance of work for you at home. We have way from that general education of our people which permits any material decrease of destitution—the source-much of our vice and crime. Passing on from the social-religious difficulties, and trusting that we shall soon be free the progress of them, what other difficulties are there in way of obtaining a thoroughly good education to all children?

There are two principally: first, incapacity in those give the time to administer, and in the teachers reared up from, to apprehend and conduct the kind of education in which we are engaged; and second, the want of means and of inclination in the many parents to do their duty adequately by their children.

7. Where may we look with hope for an improvement in the time of education?

8. In the case of the few who have already considered education as the art of so teaching and training children as to make good men of them, and who have acquired proficiency by practice in that art.

9. And how are the want of means and the apathy among parents to be overcome?

10. The improved education of the children will provide for their growing up into parents capable and desirous of caring for their children. There is too much reason to fear, that the education now imparted to children is a very poor security against their growing into indifferent parents.

11. How would you propose to bring education home to the children of those parents who are so steeped in poverty as to be unable to feed and clothe them?

T. A tax or rate must be levied to supply the means.

*P.* Can no other plan be thought of?

*T.* There are voluntary contributions; but hitherto they have proved inadequate.

*P.* You have not considered what might be the effect, if your "good Christian" friends could be induced to suspend their unseemly squabbles so far as they affect the welfare of children. Might they not form a conference among themselves, admitting Jews—in imitation of the example of the House of Commons—on an equal footing with others gathered for the purpose, to consider of the essential elements in which all might concur, of an education adapted to train up children into good men? With what prodigious effect might they not then unite their religious energies in invoking the contributions of the rich to wipe out the stain of adult luxury surrounded with religious trappings, but deaf to the cries of neglected children!

*T.* We ought to make allowance, or at least to show some indulgence, towards the rich men who live thus inexcusably, if they share in the very common impression that poverty and one of its consequences, child-neglect, are destined ever to cling to society; and that sacrifices on their part, with a view to banish poverty from the land, would be vain.

*P.* What are your own convictions as to the possibility of bringing about by education a great diminution, if not an entire suppression, of that extreme poverty to which we give the name of destitution?

*T.* Till we had paid attention to the supplement and expansion of our present education which you have been recommending, we certainly shared in the convictions and despondency of those who excuse themselves from engaging warmly in a hopeless crusade. You have thrown a light on the work of education which has enabled us to see that when once education, as you understand it, shall have been imparted to all children without exception, destitution will cease, or be reduced within so small a compass as to be easily relieved.

*P.* You and I, and I trust many besides, are in this position.

We know that there is a frightful mass of destitution among us. We know most of the causes of this destitution and we know that these causes are removable by an effort of the like of which we have studied together. Ought we not to endeavour to learn why education of the right kind is to be barbarously withheld? and who are the abettors, accessories, and tolerators, and connivers in a state of things fraught with evil?

T. Certainly we ought.

P. With which ought our thoughts to be chiefly occupied with the reasons for exculpating "professing Christians" for countenance child-neglect, or with the reasons for awakening their intelligence, appealing to their humanity, and if necessary, raising a storm of indignation, which may alarm them lest their religious pretensions be made to give way to reality properly understood and devoutly abided by?

T. There can be no doubt, while indulgence ought to be extended to those who have been reared in a tainted and moralising atmosphere, that no efforts ought to be omitted for stemming the contagion.

P. Now, what must we admit of most of those who impede the extension and improvement of education which we would have? are they Christians?

T. Many of them are, undoubtedly; for they only do so through ignorance.

P. Are there not others who shirk their obvious duties towards children through what may be called a passive depravity, which can enjoy itself while the seeds of misery, vice, and crime are being sown broadcast? Are they Christians?

T. As they call themselves so, and as society acknowledges them to be Christians, it only remains for us to class them as "professing Christians."

P. If we were compelled to accept the expression "religious or Christian difficulty" as explanatory of the withholding of education from children, how must we interpret it so as to make it intelligible?

*T.* It can only mean the ignorance of good Christians, and the insincerity of professing Christians. Thus interpreted, the term "religious difficulty" would convey some intimation of the obstruction to well-being interposed by ignorance and insincerity, sheltered under the name of religion.

*P.* Does it not appear to you that the large number of children still allowed to grow up uncared or ill-cared for, would, in the eyes of a stranger, bent upon studying our Christianity and our method of acting upon it, constitute a formidable argument against Christianity itself, or cause him to suspect the sincerity of the wealthy and powerful, at least, among "professing Christians"?

*T.* His condemnation, then, should fall upon the "professing Christians"; for if there be one duty more impressively enjoined than others in the Gospels, it is that of caring for little children.

*P.* Who, of all those who connive at child-neglect, may be considered the greater offenders against Christianity—they who profess, or they who do not profess, to be Christians?

*T.* The professing Christians, of course; for they, by their conduct, discredit Christianity. The others can do no more than exhibit the bad consequences of rejecting Christianity.

*P.* Is it not surprising that your good Christian friends should have overlooked what you have so aptly expressed—that where people misconduct themselves they inflict much greater damage upon the Christian religion by professing, than by rejecting it?

*T.* We don't perceive how you can make out that they have overlooked an inference which they could scarcely avoid making.

*P.* Perhaps I am dull; but I thought you had admitted that child-neglect was about as aggravated an offence against Christianity as man can commit. If, then, you feel compelled to bear witness, however reluctantly, to the prevalence of that sin in a so-called Christian community, must you not confess that the "good Christians" who are members of it have been sadly overborne and obstructed in their efforts to contrive that

no child shall be unprovided with the protection and care necessary for its well-being? Overborne and obstructed by whom? By open adversaries, upon whom may be visited the disgrace and reproaches due to their conduct? or by adversaries in the guise of friends, who are the loudest of the loud in proclaiming their zeal for religion?

*T.* We must yield. It would be painful to attempt an answer to your questions.

*P.* I have yet a more serious question, which, if too painful for you to answer, you may nevertheless transmit to your Christian friends. In the midst of crowds of neglected children, numerous enough almost to dishearten the humane, with all their devotion, energy, and powers of endurance, two classes of adults are observable—one of professing Christians who look on, pitying children much in the same way as they acknowledge Christ: that is, with their lips, not stirring a finger, not contributing a mite, not subtracting a luxury from their enjoyments in order to provide that children shall cease to be objects of pity—the other of men who, making no professions, stretch forth both their hands, shrink from the pollution of luxurious enjoyment, while children lack the bread of life, and not only contribute largely from their means, but work for the purpose of being able to contribute more. Which is the religious, which the irreligious class? In which shall we look for the enemies of religion? Sad to say, the conduct of some professing Christians might suggest questions still more painful. For instead of feeling shame and improving by the example of their non-professing neighbours, they have dared to disparage their labours, and to vituperate them as godless and unchristian: by which it may be supposed they mean “unlike themselves.”

## ON SOME ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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*P.* Has it ever occurred to you to consider whether this charge of being an enemy to religion has been brought in such a shape as to compel the person accused to plead to it?

*T.* Like any other serious charge, the man who is conscious of innocence ought to confute it.

*P.* If a man were publicly accused of theft, would the magistrate call upon him to disprove the accusation?

*T.* Not till the grounds on which the charge was made had been stated.

*P.* Might I then fairly ask my accusers to state the grounds—to produce the proofs on which they based their charge, before I condescended to notice it?

*T.* That cannot be doubted.

*P.* And if, in answer to my challenge, they had no acts of mine to allege against me, should I be justified in exposing their recklessness and ignorance?

*T.* They would richly deserve such exposure.

*P.* When an accuser makes a charge which he cannot substantiate, is it lawful to condemn him out of his own mouth, of the very act which he is imputing to another, and of defamation besides?

*T.* Lawful and most desirable, if the accuser be guilty.

*P.* Tell me, then, to the best of your belief, of what religion your friends consider me to be the enemy?

*T.* Of the Christian religion.

*P.* Of the Christian religion according to any possible interpretation, or only according to some particular interpretation?

*T.* We never heard them make a distinction between

different interpretations or expositions of Christianity. With them there is but one and the same Christianity since the crucifixion of Christ.

*P.* I know they will not welcome one who intrudes upon their sleepy faith; but I must insist upon their opening their eyes to facts which are indisputable. However elastic the words which are made to represent things the most opposite; the things are not the same because they are called by the same name. Is the religion which justifies slavery the same religion as that which condemns it? The Christian religion, as differently interpreted, does both. A man who cherishes the Christian religion in one sense must be its enemy in the other. Of which am I accused?

*T.* You must know very well, that believers in the Christian religion are not accustomed to consider religion in this light.

*P.* Self-styled believers, you mean. You seem to object to my inquiring what is the meaning of the question put to me, before I commit myself to an answer. A slavery-justifying and a slavery-condemning Christian, each says to me, Are you a Christian? I cannot say Yes to both of them. And the one to whom I answer "not a Christian like unto you," retorts upon me that I am not a Christian; in other words, that I am an enemy to religion.

*T.* In this country, happily, the name of Christian can no longer be desecrated by being attached to slave-holders. Are you not unnecessarily falling back upon former evil practices eschewed by all Christians, to establish distinctions which no longer exist?

*P.* Have we not, in the present day, Churchmen, Roman Catholics, Dissenters, Converts, Perverts, Renegades, and Heretics? Do they not severally arrogate to themselves the title of "Christian;" and are they equally certain of extending that title to one another?

*T.* Nevertheless, they all agree in the fundamentals of a common Christianity.

*P.* You delight me; for I am in hopes of obtaining from

you what has hitherto eluded my grasp. What are those fundamentals agreed in by all who assume the name of Christian, and make profession of the Christian faith ?

*T.* A belief in God and the Saviour.

*P.* Such conscientious and pains-taking men as you will, I am sure, excuse my wishing to ascertain whether the words "God," and "Saviour," represent the same ideas, in the persons who use them to me, that they call up in myself. If they represented different ideas, and I knew that they did, should I be warranted in answering the question, without warning my questioners of the difference between us ? Should I not be deceiving them ?

*T.* You would certainly. If the subject were not so serious, we should think you were amusing yourself in trying to perplex us.

*P.* Is it not that you are beginning to perceive that you have taken things for granted, which you have not thoroughly examined ; that you are beginning to suspect you are not quite so accurately informed as you imagined ? Let us see if an example, taken from the events of our own times, will help us to an understanding. The late dreadful carnage in the plains of Lombardy, occurred under the auspices of two self-styled Christian Emperors ; their respective clergy by no means disavowing their pretensions. Did each, with his followers, believe in God and the Saviour ?

*T.* We never heard it questioned.

*P.* Your form of answer makes me suspect that you question it. Not of you, then, for yourselves, but of you as speaking for a host of self-styled Christians ; am I not compelled to ask, repulsive as it is to put such a question, in those awful battle-fields were God and the Saviour represented by the Emperor of Austria, as fighting on his side ?

*T.* To be sure they were. You never knew a battle in which God was not invoked beforehand, and afterwards thanked by the victor.

*P.* And were God and the Saviour represented, by the Emperor of the French, as fighting for him ?



*T.* Yes, and with equal confidence. Sad to say, the omission of an appeal to God and the Saviour, before engaging in human slaughter, would be accounted impious. To shed blood, and commit rapine, provided Their names be invoked, are Christian occupations with belligerents.

*P.* Giving equal credence to Austrians and French, should we be compelled to believe that God fought against God, and the Saviour against the Saviour ?

*T.* Could you not manage to give expression to your views in more guarded language ? With all that sympathy and attraction towards you which our attendance at your classes has produced in us, we cannot but confess that we are shocked at some of the questions which you put. What would be their effect upon those who listen to you for the first time ?

*P.* Profiting by your hint, I might possibly be at some pains to administer to their religious and intellectual wants, according as I judged of their capacity to digest. However urgent may be the need of nourishment to a starving man, food must at first be administered to him cautiously, both as regards quality and quantity. I am treating you as practical inquirers and advanced learners, for whom truths cannot be couched in language too plain or too forcible. If it were my duty to announce to you the commission of a murder, with all the horrible circumstances of atrocity which distinguished it, would you not be shocked ?

*T.* Of course we should. To be otherwise, is scarcely possible to a human being.

*P.* Which would shock you most—the murder, or the narration of it ?

*T.* The murder clearly ; but we should also be shocked by the narration.

*P.* Doubtless, we should all rejoice were murders to cease in the land ; but so long as society is afflicted by them, which would you prefer, that they should be known and all the circumstances brought home to the perpetrators, or that they should be hushed up, and hidden from society ?

*T.* How can you ask such a question? When murders have been committed, it is absolutely necessary that pains should be taken to institute a most careful search and inquiry, so as to establish the guilt of the murderer, and to clear the characters of others, who, although suspected, are really innocent.

*P.* When all the circumstances are detailed in a court of law, and published in the newspapers, is it better that the people who hear and read should be shocked or not?

*T.* Better that they should be shocked. A horror of crimes committed by others, is one of the signs by which an indisposition to commit them may be inferred. A community in which the crimes that occur produce no painful sensation, must be in a very depraved state.

*P.* After the trial and conviction of the murderer, what would you think of the judge, in passing sentence, and of the public writers in commenting upon the facts, if they did their utmost to allay all the feelings of horror and disgust at the murder, the murderer, and the course of profligacy which led him to the deed?

*T.* We should think that they were ill discharging their duty to society.

*P.* What modification would be made in your opinion, if the course of life which ended in murder, had been marked by an interlarding of strong expressions of regard for religion, by a rigid attention to ceremonial forms, and by perpetual appeals to God and Christ, particularly while plotting crime and endeavouring to blind victims?

*T.* Our horror at the crime would be increased; and every body, from the judge downward, would be bound to rebuke it, if possible, in stronger language. It cannot but be an aggravation of any crime to commit and conceal it under the garb of religion.\*

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\* *Apprehension of an alleged swindler.*—William Seabright Chalkley, who, it will be remembered, absconded from Liverpool last year, being a defaulter to the extent of some 40,000*l.* to a Loan Society, of which he was Secretary and Manager, is now in the custody of the police in Southampton, where he was apprehended a day or two since. It appears that

*P.* There are bad men who do worse than this—who not only use religion as a means of throwing their victims off their guard, and of encouraging their myrmidons to daring and endurance in deeds of blood and rapine, but invoke the blessing of God and Christ upon their intended iniquities, and afterwards make a display of gratitude for their success through Divine agency. Which would be the more shocking, silently to sanction, perhaps loudly to justify, this unholy union of villany and religious pretence, or to vindicate religion by exposing the fraud attempted in its name?

*T.* To allow the imposture and villany to remain unexposed.

*P.* We may, in examining the conduct of two parties engaged in battle, be at a loss sometimes to decide where the blame rests. The act itself is horrible. Both may, one must, be in the wrong. Wherever may be the offence, is it not aggravated

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among his numerous victims was a lady named Skinner, who was a considerable shareholder in the Loan Society in question, and on whom Chalkley had also forged a bill for 400*l.* Mrs. Skinner has recently removed to Southampton, and now resides in Sussex Place. Walking down the High Street of that town a few days since in company with her brother-in-law, she met a man whom she immediately recognised to be Chalkley, and he, it would seem, reciprocated the recognition; for he tried to evade her in every possible way. To effect this object he stepped into a shop; but Mrs. Skinner followed him, and on her saying that she knew him, he told her she must be mistaken. She then said, "I know you very well, your name is Chalkley;" when he replied, "No, madam, my name is William Cook." He almost immediately went out of the shop, and walked up the street, followed by the lady, who gave him into the custody of the first policeman she met. The prisoner was taken before the borough magistrates on Saturday, the bench being occupied by Messrs. Bernard, Fall, and Stebbing, and remanded till this morning, when he will be again brought up and handed over to the authorities at Liverpool. The fact of Chalkley's apprehension was telegraphed to Liverpool, and an answer was returned announcing that a detective officer would leave there on Saturday afternoon, and he was expected at Southampton last night. The prisoner had been living with a relative at Southampton since his return to this country, and on searching the house several letters and documents were found proving his identity. Among these papers is a printed certificate of his admission and recognition as a "local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church" in Pennsylvania, where he passed as the "Rev. William S. Cook," and also letters from the pastor of the Church, the Rev. W. Thompson, giving "our dear friend W. S. Cook" a very high character for "piety," "sound doctrine," and other good qualities.—*Times*. 17th June, 1861.

by the intrusion of the Almighty—sometimes calling him the God of battles, into the field of carnage?

*T.* It is.

*P.* How does Christian practice compare with that of the heathens, who, as you know, brought their gods on the battle-field, and in general were not shy of mixing up celestial with terrestrial concerns?

*T.* Everybody admits that the spread of Christianity has greatly softened the horrors of war, although it has not yet prevailed in putting a stop to war.

*P.* That sentiment deserves a place in one of your school-books. Possibly it is to be found there. I doubt, however, whether the more intelligent Christians will admire your mode of asserting the claims of Christianity; and I am sure that the pioneers of progress have had little reason to thank the recognized exponents of Christianity for the success which has attended their labours. There are men, unworthy perhaps of being numbered by your friends among "good Christians," who would rather see the ministers of a cherished religion concur in reprobating the acts and preventing the ignorance which lead to war, and in keeping aloof from it, than in enlisting in it as eagerly as soldiers, in accepting its emoluments, in blessing the paraphernalia and pageantry by which its horrors are meant to be kept out of sight, and in alluring and encouraging recruits by assurances of the favour of God in addition to the state pay. As if this were not sufficiently irreligious, they boast, besides, of the influence of *their* religion in softening the horrors of war. Are we ever told of the influence of religion in softening the horrors of murder?

*T.* Not exactly; but we need not doubt that religion has been instrumental in diminishing the frequency of murders.

*P.* I am not disposed to raise a discussion just now upon the accuracy or appropriateness of that assertion, which doubtless is the result of cautious preparatory investigation. You must bear in mind, however, that what may truly be said to be the effect of one kind of religion will not be the effect of

another kind, and different kinds may lurk under one name. Tell me, how did the heathens represent their gods as participating in that cruel pastime—war?

*T.* Their gods were cut out for the work : human slaughter may be considered as one of the entertainments of the heathen gods.

*P.* Did the heathens ever represent their Jupiter, or even that bloody monster, Mars, as fighting against himself?

*T.* No ; having a multiplicity of gods, who were seldom of one mind among themselves, there was scope for a god or two on each side to favour the work of slaughter.

*P.* Have you formed any opinion concerning the origin of the heathen gods?

*T.* We have always looked upon them as the creation of human barbarism and superstition, fashioned after the model of those men who were regarded as heroes by their fellows—irascible, courageous, hardy, lascivious, vindictive, capricious, and cruel.

*P.* Were the heathens doing any thing inconsistent or incredible, when they represented such gods as taking an active part in scenes of outrage, blood and fury?

*T.* Not that we can see. The employment assigned to their gods was quite in keeping with the characters attributed to them.

*P.* Would you also say that the intervention of the Almighty in human affairs, as perpetually represented by Christians, corresponded with His exalted attributes?

*T.* It would be impious to say that.

*P.* I think you will agree with me that so awful a subject as the divine attributes, and the manifestations of them on earth, ought neither to be lightly entered upon nor lightly passed from. Let me ask if, among all the men with whom you are acquainted, there were one who stood pre-eminently high with you for wisdom and goodness, what would your feelings be on hearing him spoken of as actively engaged in some silly discreditable work?

*T.* Disbelief of the fact, indignation at the calumny, and a wish to expose the slanderers.

*P.* And if on challenging the slanderers for proof of their statements, they refused to retract, nay persisted in repeating it, telling you at the same time that they quite agreed in your exalted estimate of your friend, what would you think of them?

*T.* We should be at a loss to think which predominated most in their baseness—stupidity or hypocrisy?

*P.* Ought the Majesty of the Almighty to be treated with greater or less reverence than the character of a good man?

*T.* Not with less, although it is impossible to show reverence for the Majesty of the Almighty without respecting the characters of good men.

*P.* Reverting to the treatment of the Almighty by the two so-called Christian Emperors and their abettors, would it raise me in your estimation, would it relieve me from the imputation of hostility to religion, were I to profess myself a Christian like unto them, believing in their God, and trusting for redemption in their Christ?

*T.* A very, very small minority, and they not the more intelligent, of the people of this country, would wish you to accept God and Christ as portrayed by either a French or Austrian Emperor, especially when using those holy names to screen the consequences of a long course of treachery and violence on either side. But where nations are engaged in a righteous struggle for self-defence or for putting down a disturber of the general peace, we see no impropriety in their appealing to God for His support, or in their gratefully acknowledging His assistance, through the merits and intercession of their Redeemer, after they have been blessed with victory and success. The war in the Crimea, which this nation, at least, engaged in for the purpose of preventing an act of most barefaced iniquity, was one in which the omission first to ask for Divine assistance, and afterwards to express gratitude for it, would have savoured of impiety.

*P.* Can the occasions ever occur, or must they not be ex-

ceedingly rare, when both belligerents, being Christians, can be justified in asking or expecting the special intervention of their God and Saviour?

T. The occasions may even be rare when one only of the belligerents can be justified in feeling confidence enough in the goodness of his cause. When so rare an occasion does occur, there seems to be all the more reason for not neglecting it. We had more than one ground for confiding in the goodness of our cause, and for being encouraged to appeal to Heaven for assistance. We were resisting the aggressor, and our Church provides us with a purer exposition of the Christian religion than the Greek Church provides to its communicants.

P. You are introducing a matter on which I am not prepared to give an opinion. You may be familiar with the tenets of the Greek Church. I am unacquainted with them. That the Russians were the wrong-doers I have no doubt. But to avoid an element of such uncertainty, to me at least if not to you, as the relative merits of the English and Greek Churches, let us turn to what is now going on in the United States. If I am not misinformed, both parties to this most melancholy of all the melancholy spectacles of modern times, claim to be engaged in a "holy" cause. And a holy cause among Christians means one approved by God and Christ, not that either party is slow in appealing to them by name. Would you, as a Christian looker-on, pronounce on which side Divine approbation is likely to be bestowed?

T. If there ever be an occasion when man may venture, without presumption or irreverence, to form an opinion upon God's judgment in human affairs, it must be such a one as this. We should think that He can favour neither party. A minority secedes, with every demonstration of hatred and contempt, accompanied by fraud and violence, and threats of aggression, from an union of states, which if found no longer acceptable to their feelings nor adapted to their wants, would have been broken up very differently by a people deserving to be called

religious. While the United States, for so they may be called even after the amputation by which diseased members have been severed from them, instead of setting to work to heal the wound and obtain increased vitality from the very operation, are engaging in mortal strife, success in which would hamper them with the duty of governing millions of their late fellow-citizens against their consent.

P. Then you would no more recommend me to accept God and Christ, as they are believed in either by the Northern or the Southern States of the late United States of America, than you would have me accept Them from either of the two Emperors. An American, who made a selection between the two and wished to avow his preference in security, would do well to keep to his own side of the border, and thus escape the demonstrations of Christian love which might await him on the other.

T. Because men, led away by their passions and seduced through their infirmities, commit actions not sanctified by their religion, the religion itself is not to be inculpated.

P. Certainly not. A broad line of distinction, as we have said before, must be drawn between those acts generally acknowledged to be bad, which are committed by individuals led away by their passions or succumbing to temptations too strong for them to resist, and those other acts, which, if bad, are not held to be so by prevailing opinion, or felt to be so by those who commit, and encourage, and tolerate them. To do murder, to forge a signature, to bear false witness, to pick a pocket, to embezzle—these are acts contrary to law, and held also to be contrary to religion, forbidden by God and the Saviour. In spite of all this, they are committed by a few; but society—the collective nations, denounce them. It may be said that the law, prevailing opinion, written religion, verbal religion, practical religion, as exemplified in conduct, all concur in stamping them as contrary to religion. Is it as easy to pronounce in regard to all acts, as it is in regard to these, which are and which are not contrary to religion?



*T.* There is great difficulty with some of them. That, we think, is generally admitted.

*P.* Some acts have glided down the current of public opinion out of one class into another. We may feel no hesitation in characterizing as they deserve the acts of the Crusaders, of traders in slaves, and of owners of privateers; but what opinion of these acts was held by our forefathers?

*T.* As abettors of these acts, they stood in the same relation to murderers and thieves that the Scribes and Pharisees of old did to publicans and sinners.

*P.* The distinction between Scribes and Pharisees on the one hand, and publicans and sinners on the other, is, that the first commit bad acts, which are not condemned by the respectable portions of society, while the second commit those bad acts which are condemned by them. Knowing what you do of the pains that I take to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad, and to help others to a method of investigation which cannot mislead, ought I to allow the name of religion to be used to deter me?

*T.* You must feel that the name of religion would be used irreligiously for such a purpose. The right and the good, once ascertained, cannot but be religious.

*P.* If my Pharisaical calumniators, like those of old, were striving to entrap me with their questions, would you recommend me to acknowledge their God to be my God, and their Saviour to be my Saviour, because one word may be made to denote ideas so opposite? or to reject them, as I would the god of the bandit of the middle ages, who proclaimed himself to be the "Friend to God and enemy to all mankind"?

*T.* You demur, in fact, to questions expressed in words, the significance of which is not fixed with precision; and the more sacred the subject, the greater will be your caution and hesitation.

*P.* I think we must go a step further. We are bound to reject, as irreligious, all professions of religion which do not correspond with the conduct habitually practised and approved;

and also to accept no conduct as religious which is not good, however much it may be upheld by the self-constituted interpreters of religion. We must give no quarter to "religious bandits." Let me ask, if you wanted a cook, how would you set about forming your judgment of the candidates who offered themselves for your acceptance?

*T.* We should endeavour to learn which among them, with a character satisfactory in all other respects, could bring proof of her capacity to cook and serve up food to our liking.

*P.* Your judgment would be formed upon evidence of past conduct. In the absence of such evidence, would you not be influenced by knowing that she could recite, without faltering, the whole of the most approved edition of the best work on cookery?

*T.* That would have mighty little weight with us.

*P.* Would you attach still less weight to it, if you ascertained that her cookery, such as it was, did not conform to the precepts of cookery which she repeated and professed?

*T.* Still less, or rather none at all.

*P.* Would you judge architects, upholsterers, shipwrights, and engineers in the same way?

*T.* Assuredly, by their works.

*P.* Are proofs of good work the only evidence you would accept, on which to form your judgment of the goodness of workmen?

*T.* We know of no other reliable.

*P.* In the absence of such proofs, would you mistrust professions of faith?

*T.* At all events, we would accept no professions of faith unless accompanied by proofs of good works.

*P.* And if the professions of faith were not merely unaccompanied by proofs of good works, but were actually accompanied by proofs of bad workmanship, evincing an utter disregard of what it was professed ought to be executed?

*T.* Our rejection of their pretences would be made with mixed feelings of pity, contempt, and disgust for the baseness of the workmen.

P. Are you not much more circumspect in admitting claims to be received as good workmen, than you are in admitting claims to be received as good Christians?

T. We hope not.

P. Possibly I misunderstand you. Did you not say that certain persons, described by you as "good Christians," had denounced me as an enemy to religion?

T. They are labouring under a mistake; but we feel convinced that they are conscientious in believing you to be an enemy to religion.

P. You excuse them on the ground of their being accustomed to believe, independently of proof: a dangerous habit, as affects their character for trustworthiness, whether reporting upon the reputations of their neighbours, or glorifying, or rather, I should say falsifying, the attributes of the Godhead. We must not suffer the sacred theme of religion to be defiled either by the unscrupulousness or the obtuseness of those who make it a profession.

T. The fierceness of your onslaught quite throws us off our balance. We feel tongue-tied.

P. Reflect awhile, and recover your self-possession. Bear in mind that you have put me on my defence. I am not the accuser. You say that the witnesses who testify to what they hold to be infamous against me, are "conscientious." If the charge be nothing more than an outburst of stolid malignity, ought I not to shake their testimony out of their own mouths?

T. But you do shake it so unmercifully!

P. You do not say, perhaps you do not mean, that I have gone beyond what was required of me, in order to expose and make manifest the utter worthlessness of their testimony for any other purpose than that of proving their own misconduct, or, if one might stoop to use their language, their own impious blasphemies. To be merciful to an untrustworthy witness, whether his untrustworthiness originate in mendacity or stupidity, is to assist in screening the guilty, in convicting the innocent, and in spreading feelings of alarm and insecurity

throughout society. Your expression, it cannot be denied, is unfortunate. The "unmerciful shaking of a false witness," is an expression of pity for a perjurer, and might be used for the purpose of covering his escape from the consequences of his perjury, by fixing them upon his intended victim. But let us not be detained from our main inquiry: Are you disposed to take as much pains to ascertain who is a good Christian as who is a good cook?

*T.* You ought not to doubt it.

*P.* A good cook, we have agreed, is one who cooks good dinners. Who is a good Christian?

*T.* He must, at least, be one who does good works. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

*P.* You would hardly object to the quaint expression of one of the early fathers,—“He who does good is a Christian, though he be an atheist.” May I add, “and who does not connive at good works left undone”?

*T.* Of course. To connive at good works left undone is not very far removed from doing bad works.

*P.* Is any kind of conduct specially enjoined by the Christian religion?

*T.* Love to God and love to man, as nearly as possible the words of the Saviour, will suffice to convey to you our notions of the conduct enjoined to Christians.

*P.* Quite. And of which conduct can we judge more readily,—that towards God or that towards man?

*T.* Of conduct towards man. We can scarcely judge of conduct towards God, except through conduct towards man. Conduct towards God is not otherwise cognizable, beyond each individual's consciousness.

*P.* Is “Love one another,” then, the Divine precept by which love to God may most readily be judged?

*T.* More readily than by any other known to us.

*P.* Granting that there may be some difficulty in inferring that love to God is sure to be felt by those who show most indubitably their love to man, is there any such difficulty to

prevent our affirming the negative—that love to God cannot be that by those who evince in their conduct want of love to man?

T. There is not.

P. What ought we to surmise of those professing Christians who, while they evince in their conduct little or no love to man, are loud in their proclamations of love to God?

T. That they are unconsciously advertising their hypocrisy, while thinking to parade their Christianity.

P. Many of the sins of commission, and some also of the sins of omission, in the conduct of man to man, have departed from us, but there yet remains to perplex, if not to shame us, the contrast between rich and poor. How do you think the rich Christians obey the divine precept, "Love one another," in their conduct to the poor?

T. You are raising a difficult question.

P. And if that difficult question concerns our suffering fellow-creatures, ought it not to be raised?

T. Yes: but we must be careful how we raise it, lest we do mischief; and great mischief would be done if the notion were set abroad that the rich either caused the poverty of the poor, or were able to prevent it.

P. There were two men who came into the possession of great riches. In the neighbourhood of each was a poverty-stricken population. One of the rich men went among his poor neighbours, lent a helping hand to those who had self-help in them, did some good turn to all, gathered the children together in a well-appointed school, and engaged for them excellent teachers. The other gathered his friends about him, lived hospitably and merrily. When he thought of his poor neighbours, he pitied them, and consoled himself with the reflection that he had not caused their poverty, and that it was beyond his power to prevent it. In the lapse of time, supposing two such rich men to live for many years, and to persevere in the conduct with which they set out, should you expect that there would be any difference in the number of the destitute in their respective neighbourhoods?

*T.* No doubt there would be less destitution among the people raised out of any school approaching to your standard of excellence.

*P.* Are you not in contradiction with yourselves ?

*T.* You must allow us to correct and limit our first assertion. We meant that the possessions of the rich are not the cause of the poverty of the poor ; and that charitable contributions applied to the relief of poverty will not prevent, but may extend it.

*P.* Would a judicious application of the riches of the rich to the education of children who must otherwise be deprived of education, tend to avert future destitution ?

*T.* It would.

*P.* How, then, shall we say those rich obey the divine precept, " love one another," who suffer any children within their reach to remain uneducated ?

*T.* It must be confessed that they disobey it.

*P.* How do they show their love for God ?

*T.* Neither do they love God, unless it be possible to love God and disregard little children, the most helpless of our fellow-creatures.

*P.* Will you not be disposed to retract or reconsider this answer, if I can show you that rich men—men rolling in wealth, eminent men, men highly esteemed, particularly by bishops and heads of colleges, well-endowed clergymen, and learned judges, men regular at church, constant in prayer, loud in proclaiming their belief in God and a Saviour, live as if they were quite unconscious that a well-contrived application of a small part of their superfluities would save the larger number of the children, now neglected, from worse than destitution—from pollution, crime, and sin ?

*T.* We give in. The rich men, Christian according to the verdict of former days, lived precisely in the same way, face to face with the slave-trade, impressment, duelling, and other abominations ; and yet we do not hesitate to say that these were most unchristian practices. We dare not, therefore,

[REDACTED] I have believed, although  
[REDACTED] Christians must also  
[REDACTED] in events, and people  
[REDACTED] of nations, and as  
[REDACTED] will never permit you to  
[REDACTED] system. They will tax  
[REDACTED] with rebellion.

[REDACTED] in battle or firm. I seek  
[REDACTED] to act in a way that  
[REDACTED] and wishing to  
[REDACTED] I am to be deterred  
[REDACTED] however vile,  
[REDACTED] I will never  
[REDACTED] their first showing

[REDACTED] by this  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to purge  
[REDACTED] to themselves to make  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] which they must go  
[REDACTED] which they do not  
[REDACTED] clean. We  
[REDACTED] of their own  
[REDACTED] self-examination, I will  
[REDACTED] as their preliminary  
[REDACTED] in the first instance.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] those who act in a way to  
[REDACTED] and back when their  
[REDACTED] to great suffering from

P. May I call ill-treatment of children and connivance at their neglect or abandonment, conduct that exposes society to suffering?

T. Certainly, and the men who are guilty of either, bad men. Painful as such admissions may be to any present generation, they must be made, if all thoughts of amendment for future generations are not to be abandoned.

P. Now, as you wish to promote the spread of Christianity, tell me, whether would the men whom you have just confessed to be bad, promote Christianity more by denying Christ, or by appealing to Him in justification of their conduct?

T. Denying Christ would not make their conduct less black.

P. You are doing full justice to the "good Christians" whom you have undertaken to represent. You have not emancipated yourselves from the habit of evading unpleasant questions. I will put the question in another form. If bad acts are to be committed, and there be persons who profess, and others who reject Christianity—by which of the two would you rather that the bad acts were committed?

T. By those who rejected Christianity.

P. And why?

T. Because no disgrace would thereby be attached, even in appearance, to Christianity.

P. And if Christianity is to be rejected by some, and professed by others, by whom would you rather it were professed?

T. By good men, of course.

P. And why?

T. Because no specious appearance of goodness would be thrown by them over bad acts, to the scandal of religion and to the damage of society.

P. Allow me now to put together your answers. Of two men, equally bad in other respects, the professing Christian is a worse Christian than the non-professing, because, as far as he can, he brings Christianity into disrepute. And of two men, who commit equally bad acts, one a professing Christian, the



other not, the professing Christian is the worse man, because he assists in throwing a veil of sanctity over bad conduct.

*T.* We are bound to admit that you have summed up with perfect fairness.

*P.* I fear that the case, against your self-proclaimed Christian friends is stronger than I have yet put it. They meet with people who are urgently calling attention to a fatal omission in what has hitherto been attempted for children under the name of education. How do your "Christian friends" respond to this call? By turning a deaf ear to it, by whispering insinuations against the Christianity of those who make it, and by arousing suspicions and distrust, so that a hearing may be denied to them.

*T.* But you must do them the justice to remember that they do not admit the omission of which you speak.

*P.* As the omission is plain to you, how happens it to continue hidden from them? Can they not, or will they not see?

*T.* Their infatuation—for such we cannot but call it—seems to be caused rather by a dislike to look, than by any defect of sight. A dislike to look, although it leads to the same result, is not quite so bad as wilful blindness—a determination not to see.

*P.* If dislike to look lead to not seeing, and not seeing lead to not doing; and that which thereby is not done be something essential to well-being, should those who are smitten with this dislike be left to occupy positions of trust and power?

*T.* Your aim is evident. But it must be borne in mind that to dispossess them, means to engage in controversy and strife, not a very improving occupation, and one to be escaped from if possible.

*P.* Assuredly. As omissions have to be supplied, and alterations have to be made in other works besides those of education, can we learn, think you, how to avoid strife, and yet not shut out improvement, by examining the method of management in some of them?

*T.* If heads of industrial concerns and managers of works

were to refuse to adopt the improvements presented to them, they know that they would soon be deserted by their customers, and abler administrators would occupy their places. This knowledge quickens their perceptions, and causes them, with few exceptions, not only gratefully to accept, but diligently to seek out, improved methods. Sad to say, they will sometimes even infringe patents, by which the profits from inventions are meant to be secured to the inventors.

*P.* And your "Christian friends" reject the unpatented improvements offered to them?

*T.* They are not looking for profit, like manufacturers and dealers.

*P.* So it would seem. Although we would not quarrel with them, if they were as eager to adopt educational improvements, the object of which is to promote religiousness, and to prevent sin, as tradesmen are to adopt industrial improvements, the object of which is to obtain profit. Are wares more precious to a merchant than the souls of little children to a divine?

*T.* It is hardly fair to judge divines, as if they could entirely escape the infirmities of our common nature.

*P.* Well said. But would you allow them to cling to their malpractices as religious, and to warn off improvements as irreligious, or insist upon their submitting to the obligations imposed upon tradesmen?

*T.* For their own sakes, as well as for the good of society, submission ought to be insisted upon.

*P.* The figurative language familiar to us suggests a comparison between the duties of a baker and those of a religious teacher. One distributes corn-bread; the other distributes the bread of life. What will happen to the first, if he adulterate, give short weight, or turn out an unpalatable loaf?

*T.* The smallest evil to befall him would be the loss of his customers; and hence, of his means of living. The arm of the law might be stretched out against him besides.

*P.* Would no sanctimonious pretences avail him—not even a refusal, for "Christ's sake," to bake Sunday dinners?

T. There would be but one opening for his escape—repentance, followed up by reform.

P. And how with those who distribute the bread of life, the principal ingredient of which is the education of children? What, if they adulterate and give short weight? What, if they distribute theological garbage, and call it Christian doctrine? What, if they warn off as infidels those who, shocked at the sight of child-maltreatment, and at the thought of future adult vice and misery, interfere to admonish them?

T. They must be resisted—if, possible, reformed; otherwise superseded.

P. To revert to the omission which you say your “Christian friends” do not admit. Have they ever attempted to do more than deny this omission? Have they ever exposed, as would be their duty, where the mistake exists with those who explain what this omission is, and who court inquiry into the truth of their representations? No; this is beyond their power. They are allowing this truth, as their predecessors have allowed many other truths, to work its way into the minds of good and religious people through all the impediments placed in its way by sloth roused into malignity against the disturbers of its slumbers. So far from aiding and encouraging, they are opposing the spread of truth and of good-will to man, in the name of a religion, the strongest recommendation of which is that it sanctifies both.

T. We must say you have made us feel very uncomfortable. We are not prepared to condemn men, whom we have long looked up to, either as so ignorant or so bad as you represent them. Your comparing them to the Pharisees of old is particularly obnoxious to us.

P. The comparison is rather your own than mine. I would, as a rule, prefer confining myself to the investigation of acts, and avoid discussing the characters of the men who perform them. I can more easily keep my judgment unclouded, when spared the task of apportioning censure or praise, according as either is deserved. You would not have me mistake or ignore

facts, and reject inferences, because you are able to discover that men whom you have esteemed become involved in the condemnation which you are unable to withhold? If I were appointed surveyor to examine into the condition of an estate, with which and its manager I was wholly unacquainted, what, in your opinion, would it be my duty to do?

T. To ascertain that condition, to bring to bear upon it all the knowledge and experience of which you were master, to ascertain the causes that had brought it into that condition, and to point out the course of management likely to maintain or improve that condition, according as you judged it to be favourable or unfavourable.

P. If I thought the management of the estate indicative of ignorance, carelessness, or dishonesty in the steward, should I be justified in concealing or misrepresenting the condition of the estate in order to screen the steward?

T. No. For that might be to waste the revenues of an estate appropriated to the maintenance of some school, hospital, or asylum, and to connive at the degradation and misery of all the labourers dwelling upon it.

P. Would you charge me with harshness or bitterness towards the steward, if I did my best to convey to these who deputed me a faithful and vivid picture of their property in every particular?

T. Certainly not. You would be guilty of breach of trust were you to do otherwise.

P. Might I not, on discovering what appeared to me proofs of negligence, ignorance, and omission, communicate with the steward in case he should be able to explain some portions of his management, which appeared unsatisfactory?

T. That would be to deal fairly with the steward, while attending scrupulously to the trust.

P. It might happen that, while I was most decided in my judgment as to the mismanagement of the estate, I should not be entirely without hope that the steward might be awakened to a perception of his mismanagement, and be put in the way

of conducting his stewardship satisfactorily for the future. Ought I, in that case, to strive to enlighten him, so that, while reporting truthfully upon the condition of the estate, and upon the causes which had led to it, I might recommend a further trial of the steward, recently become aware of his past errors, and anxious to repair the mischief occasioned by them?

*T.* If the good management of the estate could be secured without sacrificing the steward, it would be a kindness to give him the benefit of your advice and instruction to enable him to retain his office.

*P.* If, while my mind was full of the thoughts of serving him, so far as I could without detriment to the estate, I met with suspicion and resistance to all my suggestions; and if, in the belief that the owner of the estate was far away, and incapable of seeing through his misrepresentations, this steward proceeded to accuse me falsely, justifying his own conduct under the plea that he was following out his master's instructions, and acting up to his orders, what course would be open to me?

*T.* No other than to report as truly of his utter and hopeless unfitness, as of the ill-condition of the estate that had resulted from it.

*P.* Would any blame attach to me because I had been unable to report upon the ill-condition of the estate, without implicating the steward?

*T.* No. The steward made it impossible to justify him while condemning the management. He it was who insisted that the improvement of the estate must be looked upon as hopeless under his stewardship.

*P.* When a man has suffered himself, or been suffered by others, to glide into a lax or slovenly discharge of duty, and is at last disturbed from his slothful routine, what is the worst line of conduct for him to adopt?

*T.* To fancy himself aggrieved, and to look about to discover how he can find an excuse for blaming anybody rather than himself. Walking unconsciously on the brink of a precipice, in momentary danger of destruction, he treats the stranger

who would caution him as an enemy, and regards his warning as an act of hostility. To a man thus disposed, preservation is impossible. If he will not be warned, he cannot be saved.

*P.* What would it be best for him to do ?

*T.* To shake off his lethargy, to receive the warning as meant for his own good as well as for the improvement of the estate under his charge, and not to wrap himself up in mistaken notions that his dignity might be compromised by admitting that he was fallible and had been inattentive to his duties. Among erring men, the penitent sinner is more easily led into the right path than the self-righteous.

*P.* Transferring our thoughts from an estate and its steward, to a school and its master, are the interests at stake of less importance ?

*T.* Of greater, we should say.

*P.* What is it that constitutes the trust under the charge of a schoolmaster ?

*T.* The souls of little children.

*P.* Is the probable future welfare of children greatly dependent upon the intelligence and skill with which they are taught and trained ?

*T.* There can be no difference of opinion in regard to that.

*P.* How will a schoolmaster, who has avowedly proved himself unfit for his vocation, be dealt with, either by the trustees of the school or the parents of the children ?

*T.* He will be dismissed from his office, or the children will be removed from his school.

*P.* If, instead of one master avowedly unfit, there be many unconsciously doing the wrong or omitting the right thing, in order to accomplish the future welfare of their children, and if the parents and trustees share in their unconsciousness, what ought the stranger to do, who, looking on their proceedings, observes their omissions, and thinks he could assist to rectify them ?

*T.* He ought to work with all his might to make them conscious of their omissions, and to show how they might be supplied.

*P.* And how ought his intercession in behalf of the children to be received?

*T.* There comes the difficulty. He ought to be welcomed; but, to be welcomed, he must be understood; and were he understood, the necessity for his interposition would not have occurred, and his suggestions would have been anticipated. The ignorance, or prejudice, or blindness, which closes their eyes to the omission which glares upon him, gives him the appearance not of a friend, but of an obstructor; and prepares for him treatment accordingly. Besides, do not intruders push themselves into schools as elsewhere, and must they not be kept out, or school-work be given up?

*P.* I acknowledge the difficulty as you state it. I have felt it, and have had to deal with it as I best could. You agree with me that duty, benevolence, and religion all point in one direction: the children must not be abandoned. Access to the children was sought by me at the school-doors. I knocked, made known my business, and was told, with rare exceptions, that my services were not needed.

*T.* You cannot have been much surprised at your reception; which was the consequence of the inability of school-masters to understand your object, not of any indisposition in them to do good to their children. They may have been intent upon doing that according to their lights.

*P.* Although I was not greatly surprised, I do not regret having made my appeal to the schools and the teachers as I saw them. I am clear from the blame of wishing to treat them with disrespect. My good intentions, for so I think I may call them, towards the children were first embodied in applications to the authorities actually in command of existing schools. Were my good intentions to remain ineoperative because my first attempts were not sufficiently successful to answer my purpose?

T. Fortunately, you were not disposed to be so readily discouraged.

P. To make use of a common expression, I threw myself upon the open market. I brought my views before the public, in the only shape in which their concurrence with them could be ascertained. I promoted the opening of schools, in which the kind of instruction omitted in other schools should be imparted to the children, and subjects beyond their comprehension should be excluded.

T. And while your opponents are unconscious of the omission in their own schools, they are scandalized at what appears to them the grave omission in yours.

P. They are more keenly alive to the mote in my eye than to the beam in their own.

T. Might they not retort that upon you?

P. Without pretending to be entirely free from blame, or to having contrived as well as I might to allay hostility, while in performance of what I believed to be a sacred duty, I have originated no charges against them, not even such as I have been blamed for not bringing. Is it to be wondered at if, in repelling an unjustifiable attack, my defence should lay bare the character of those who can so far forget religion and decency? Bear in mind, I have never urged others to discontinue what they call religious or scriptural instruction in their schools. I have never made the doing of what individually I disapprove an excuse for keeping aloof from them, or for refusing to assist them to supply the omission which I have pointed out to them.

T. Nevertheless, you openly express your disapproval of the reading of the Bible in schools?

P. I certainly do. Not that my doing so is the reason for their rejection of what I insist upon being taught to children. Their rejection of my appeal in behalf of the children, led to the establishment of schools from which Bible-lessons were banished. Their rejection of what I hold to be vital instruction, preceded the working-out of my con-



viction in regard to the incapacity of children for reading the Bible with profit.

*T.* As soon as you gave them the opportunity, they chose the higher ground for giving you battle. They found it easier to attack you than to defend their own position.

*P.* Amiable Christians ! I know not which to admire most, their military tactics or their love of children. But, grant that they could succeed in gibbeting me, and in smothering the cries of children, my two questions still have to be met :— Ought systematic instruction in the rules of conduct to be imparted in all schools ? and are children competent to interpret the Bible ; or ought they to read it uninterpreted ?

*T.* These certainly are the two questions which have to be met with yea or nay. To the first, we are quite prepared to say yea. We will follow the elucidations which you have consented to give us in support of your views, before we commit ourselves definitively either to yea or nay, in answer to the latter.

## ON THE OLD TESTAMENT AS A SCHOOL-BOOK.

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*P.* In entering upon this conversation with you, which I do most readily, let us bear in mind that I am only acceding to your wishes. I purposely keep out of the way of what goes, so inappropriately, in my opinion, by the name of Bible-instruction in schools. I would avoid making well-disposed men uncomfortable, by allowing signs of disapprobation to escape me, while I could not hope to divert them from the mistaken course in which they are engaged.

*T.* The expositions with which you have promised to favour us are entirely of our own seeking. We have become restless under a sense of some unsatisfied want, and we are in search of peace of mind as well as of information.

*P.* As these meetings originated at your request, and you know best what your own difficulties are, I propose that you shall hold the Bible, and make your own selections of the passages that we are to discuss. We can do no more than go through a small part of it; and yet I wish to give you complete satisfaction. I will beg of you, therefore, to confine yourselves to passages which you are in the habit of reading in your schools, and which you know to be read in schools generally, and to understand that my strictures will be directed to point out why I think the intelligence, disposition, and conduct of children are not likely to be favourably impressed through them.

*T.* You are already throwing to the winds one of the aspersions which we have heard directed against you. We were

mentioning what you had undertaken to do for us; and we were told, with a sneer, that your task would be easy enough—that you would only have to dig out chapters and verses, carefully withdrawn from the eyes of children and uniformly passed over; to expatiate upon their unfitness for schools; and then to extend your condemnation from those passages to the whole of the sacred volume; while we sat in silent and respectful admiration of your logical acumen and your keen sense of moral propriety.

*P.* I should not be surprised to learn that these same men, in the virulent ardor of their attacks upon a Church which will only admit selections from the Bible, might be heard vociferating; “the Bible, the whole Bible, the un mutilated Bible, and nothing but the Bible.” They are unconscious, while wishing to make you suspicious of me, and uncomfortable besides, that they are indirectly confessing the error of their ways in putting the Bible into the hands of children. There must be some egregious mistake in the mental and moral training that can lead to such insensibility to truth, self-contradiction, and decorum.

*T.* We are quite content to leave the order of our proceedings in your hands. We have one common object in view—to show how school-work may be made most efficient, in sending forth into the world religious and well-conducted men.

*P.* As both the Old and the New Testament are made to furnish lessons to the children; we may as well have examples from both, beginning with the Old.

*T.* No part of the Old Testament is thought to contain lessons better adapted to the feelings and understandings of children than some of the chapters of Genesis. The language is simple and graphic, and the narratives most touching. The third chapter, describing the fall of man, is always a favourite.

*P.* Will you read the 22nd and following verses of that chapter?

*T.* “And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put

forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever :

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

"So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

P. I assume that you would not allow the children who had been reading those verses to depart, leaving you in the dark as to the impressions made upon their minds. You will have been striving to teach them how to distinguish between good and evil, and to incline them to cleave to the good and eschew the evil. Is there not some danger that this chapter might be misconstrued by the children to represent God as disapproving of knowledge in man, lest he should become thereby as one of the Gods?

T. The 4th chapter, describing the murder of Abel, is another lesson of frequent occurrence in our schools.

P. The scenes and the manners are of older times. The like of them must be almost inconceivable to children, who will have been taught by you to look up to God as a father supremely good and wise. Here He might be looked down upon as a Being whimsically disposed to prefer the sacrifice of a lamb to that of vegetable crops, manifesting groundless partiality, and sowing jealousy and ill-feeling between brothers. The children might also think how differently it would have fared with Cain, if he and Abel had been taught that the love of brothers would be more acceptable to God than burnt-offerings.

T. We are beginning to fear that we have been more absorbed by the reflections awakened in our own minds from the children's readings, than by those likely to have been awakened in theirs. Henceforward, we will, if possible, attend to both. The dreadful visitation of the Deluge, the wonderful structure of the Ark, and the going in and going forth of Noah and his family, we have always found to be a lesson most interesting to children.



# PHILO-SOCRATES.

A SERIES OF PAMPHLETS, CONTAINING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE  
 PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANCIENTS, AND THE HISTORY OF THE  
 PHILOSOPHY OF THE MODERNS, IN A SERIES OF PAMPHLETS,  
 WHICH WILL BE SENT BY POST, ON RECEIPT OF THE  
 MONEY.

BY WILLIAM LAMONT.

AUTHOR OF "RELIGION IN CONFLICT WITH SCIENCE," &c. &c.  
 &c. &c.

VOL. II.—RELIGION IN CONFLICT WITH SCIENCE.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO. 15, N. B. ST. 1854.

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*P.* Again, I say, a main object with teachers ought to be to ascertain what thoughts children carry away with them from their reading-lessons. If their understandings are torpid, religious instruction there is none; if awake, how are they reconciling God's wrath with God's goodness, and what are their notions of man's wickedness, which left God no resource but a deluge? What, also, are likely to be their notions of the efficacy of the Deluge in putting an end to wickedness, when Noah, the blessed of God, was led to curse his own son for conduct arising out of his own drunkenness?

*T.* We feel that we have much to amend in our past teaching. We pass over some of the succeeding chapters, as containing matter generally acknowledged to be unfit for children. But we are bound to make them acquainted with the life of Abraham.

*P.* And do you succeed in showing them that although Abraham was chosen of the Lord, it would not be right in them, and why not, to imitate his conduct? A man and his wife who, in our time, should treat a little child and its mother as Abraham and Sarah treated Ishmael and Hagar, would be held up as a disgrace to society, and highly irreligious. The children, under the influence of their other teaching and training, will not be slow to show their pity for Ishmael and his mother, and their indignation at Abraham and Sarah's cruel treatment of them. You would be cautious how you repressed feelings that you would regret not to see directed against an Abraham and a Sarah living in their neighbourhood, and yet you have to vindicate God's approval of the Abraham and Sarah of Genesis. Can this be made intelligible to children? If not, which is the more religious, to defer such reading for riper years, or to force it upon children, careless of the impression for good or evil likely to be produced?

*T.* We suspect that the merit of these family pictures—the simple, graphic, and touching character of the descriptions, adds in your estimation to the impropriety and danger of obtruding this reading upon children. The scenes in Isaac's

household introduce us to details of brotherly, as well as of parental conduct, which will appear to you still more unfit for children.

*P.* I wish you could abstain from paying any respect to my supposed opinions, and confine yourselves to a cautious and rigid scrutiny of the reasons which I offer, and which have satisfied me that in matters sacred, as well as matters trivial, nothing ought to be presented to children which they cannot be brought either to understand, or to perceive that they do not understand. You want to form their characters. You place before them examples of conduct. If they are not comprehended by the children you are trifling with their understandings. If they are comprehended, will the children think that these examples ought to be approved or condemned, to be imitated or shunned by them? This is a matter not to be treated with indifference. Will you read the last eight verses of chapter twenty-five?

*T.* "And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

"And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

"And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

"And Jacob said, sell me this day thy birthright.

"And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

"And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright."

*P.* You cannot have been so fortunate as to escape listening at



times to some incoherent twaddle about the iniquity of buying cheap and selling dear. Contemptible enough, you may think it, but strange besides, to proceed from the mouths of men who are insisting that a narrative like this shall be read by children unaccompanied by instruction as to its bearing upon what the conduct of brothers ought to be in these days. The teachers who expound to children the beneficial effects upon society of the practice of buying cheap and selling dear, have never, to my knowledge, thought of recommending that all family affection should disappear before it. They point out the duty of relieving destitution—even the destitution of strangers. They could not expose children to the risk of carrying away with them the impression that a boy, in these days, might be “religious,” and at the same time force his brother, under the penalty of starvation, to deliver up his possessions. Among the many times that you have listened to children reading this chapter, have you once heard the confession emphatically drawn from them “how wicked they would be if they acted towards their brothers as Jacob acted to Esau?”

T. We certainly have not.

P. The subsequent conduct of the man Jacob to his brother, is quite in keeping with that of the boy. Will you read chapter twenty-seven? It is a beautiful specimen of pathetic writing.

T. “And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son, and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

“And he said, Behold, now I am old, I know not the day of my death.

“Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;

“And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

“And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

“And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

“Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord, before my death.

“Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

“Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth.

“And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

“And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:

“My father, peradventure, will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

“And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

“And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.

“And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

“And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck.

“And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

“And he came unto his father, and said, my father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

“And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou hadest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

"And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son ? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.

"And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

"And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father ; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

"And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands : so he blessed him.

"And he said, Art thou my very son Esau ? And he said I am.

"And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat : and he brought him wine, and he drank.

"And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

"And he came near, and kissed him : and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed :

"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine ;

"Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee : be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee : cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

"And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

"And he also made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

"And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou ? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn, Esau.

"And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who ? where is he that hath taken venison and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him ? Yea, and he shall be blessed.

"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, my father.

"And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

"And he said, is not he rightly named Jacob ? for he hath supplanted me these two times ; he took away my birthright ; and behold, now, he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me ?

"And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants ; and with corn and wine have I sustained him : and what shall I do now unto thee, my son ?

"And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father ; bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

"And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.

"And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother ; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him : and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand ; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

"And these words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah : and she sent and called Jacob, her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

"Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother, to Haran;

"And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

"Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him; then I will send and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

"And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?"

*P.* Here is a theme well calculated to exercise the reasoning faculties, if sufficiently matured to enter into its spirit; otherwise to confound all attempts at obtaining a clue to some moral principle or rule of conduct. No child ought to read this chapter till he can bring to it the conviction, and carry that conviction away, strengthened if possible by the perusal, that a mother in these days, acting as Rebekah acted to her two boys, would be a corruptor of one and an abettor of the plunder of the other by his own brother; that a brother, acting as Jacob acted to Esau and his father, with the connivance of his own mother, would be a swindler; and that a father, weak enough to hold that he was bound to a promise extracted from him by fraud, was violating his real promise under the delusion of keeping it: refusing to take back from the robber to give to him robbed, because "rights ought to be respected"—"promises ought to be performed."

*T.* One of your fears is, that children who read these descriptions of the morals and manners of a primitive and barbarous people might, if unwatched, adopt many of them as worthy of imitation. A medley of good and evil ought not to be placed before them till they are capable of discriminating the one from the other. A thought has struck us to-day for the first time—that in the narrative which we have just read, every expression that might convey an opinion upon the

character of the conduct set forth, is avoided. The judgment of the reader may be said to have full play, no bias being given. It is left to him to decide in harmony with the intellectual cultivation and moral nature which he brings to the perusal.

*P.* And what moral nature and intellectual cultivation can children bring to bear upon a scene of adult life thus spread before them? Are not children the germs of good or bad, civilized or barbarous, intelligent or ignorant men, to become either according to the state of society into which they are born—to the teaching and training of which they are to be the recipients? Will not the good, the civilized, the intelligent, form a very different judgment of the actors in the scene which you have presented to us, to that which will be formed by the bad, the barbarous, and the ignorant? Will it not be a matter of uncertainty what impressions will be made upon children—upon those who are unformed, both as to their habits and intellects?

*T.* And it is our province to keep watch over those emotions and judgments which might run counter to the teaching and training intended to guide them aright.

*P.* Would you consider it judicious to allow a halo of sanctity to mislead your boys as to the character of a transaction which in these days would be described as a conspiracy between a mother and one child to defraud another child and cozen the father?

*T.* No reverence for sanctity should be allowed to grow up in opposition to rectitude of conduct.

*P.* Bound down to the practice of what is called teaching the Bible, would a schoolmaster be doing good service if he followed up such a reading-lesson as you have just given us by some talk over it with his boys?

*T.* We are resolved henceforward to omit no precautions to prevent mischief, if we cannot succeed in extracting good from our Bible-lessons.

*P.* Tell me whether you think questions of this kind would be suitable for your purpose, and what answers you would like

to find your children capable of giving ? If a young person in the present day were tempted by his mother to do some grievous wrong, what should you think of his disposition, if the only objection offered by him to his seducer was on the ground of the risk of discovery incurred by himself ?

*T.* Such a question ought to be put, and we should be sorry if our boys did not answer without hesitation that the young culprit was proving himself to be cowardly as well as hardened.

*P.* What if he got over his alarm on his mother's undertaking to pay the penalty of the crime by which he was to profit, in case of discovery and conviction ?

*T.* We would excuse any terms, however harsh, in which our boys might give expression to their horror and disgust.

*P.* Would it extenuate or aggravate the enormity of his offence if it were proved that, while carrying out the plot, he boasted, in order to allay his father's suspicions, of the assistance which he had received from the Lord ?

*T.* There would be but one opinion, we trust, among our children, that no offence could be so bad as not to be capable of being made more disgusting by an attempt either to perpetrate or to conceal it under an appeal to God.

*P.* What would you think of an aggrieved brother in these days, if no discovering the fraud practised upon him, he threatened to commit murder ?

*T.* We should hope to elicit this answer—that only one of two courses would be pursued by a good man : to submit in silence to the wrong for the honour of the family, taking precautions against the wrong-doer for the future ; or to hand him over to the magistrate to be dealt with according to law.

*P.* The effect of sending children to church to sit out what they cannot understand, has been faithfully described in their behalf by somebody more ready with his pen than they can be, but with as thorough an appreciation of their feeling as themselves :—

“ There goes the parson, there goes the clerk,  
There go we little boys all in the dark.”

The difference to children between poring over the Bible at school, and listening to it at church, is that instead of being left in the dark, they may be unintentionally propelled into evil courses. It is a satisfaction to me to perceive that you are resolved to keep watch over yours in future, while you are doomed to the severe task of making that darkness visible to them which is invisible to the very parties who first impose upon you a task, difficult enough under any circumstances, and then do their utmost to make your success impossible.

*T.* The narrative of Jacob's early married life, the reason for his having two sisters to wife at the same time, the state of concubinage—all indicative of very different notions of morality to those now prevailing, are evidently unsuitable reading for children, and we will pass them by.

*P.* You are, I see, partly in accord with me. You acknowledge the necessity of moral teaching and training to prepare for the perusal of some parts of the Scriptures; while I insist upon it to prepare for the perusal of the whole. The free and easy way in which Rachel robs her father and distracts his attention from the spot where the stolen property is concealed, by appealing to his consideration because the custom of women was upon her (Genesis, chap. 31), is no less characteristic of patriarchal life than the low notion concerning the sanctity of the matrimonial tie.

*T.* The story of the cruel treatment of Joseph by his brethren, and of his being carried off into Egypt, always excites a lively sympathy among the children of our schools.

*P.* It could scarcely be otherwise. But I think you will agree with me that the direction given to these sympathies ought not to be disregarded. Pray read verses three and four of chapter thirty-seven.

*T.* "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colours.

"And when his brethren saw that their father loved him



more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him."

P. Suppose the children who read this chapter to bring to it no preparation beyond the power of reading, as is too frequently the case, will they not be likely to overlook that if a father were now-a-days to act like Israel, he would be held accountable for the hatred of his other children towards Joseph? In loving and obeying their own fathers, ought they not to be sensible of the kindness and impartiality with which they are treated, and conscious of the advantages they enjoy from such fathers, compared with those enjoyed by the children of the patriarchs? The favouritism of parents begets jealousies among children long before the capacity of self-control or self-guidance is to be expected. The consequences likely to follow are arrogance and conceit in the favourites, hatred towards the favourites in the others.

T. Is there much reason to fear that children will not draw this inference without our assistance?

P. What inferences children will draw without assistance depend upon the assistance which they had previously received. So soon as children or grown-up men have been qualified by assistance, that is, by systematic instruction in the principles and rules by which good and bad conduct may be distinguished, scenes of life, even of depraved life, will become exercises for the improvement both of the understanding and of the social sympathies. But previous to such instruction, parents and other guardians of childhood ought to be made very uneasy when thinking of the impression which may possibly be produced by a familiarity with the vices and iniquities of men generally spoken of with respect.

T. We are not entirely without fear from another source of danger. This awakening of the inquisitiveness, we had almost said, of the scepticism of children while reading the Bible, might shake their respect for the doctrines as well as for the men whose lives and characters are portrayed in it. Their inexperience disqualifies them for giving the requisite softening

corrections to the harshness of their judgments. It is no easy matter even for us always to bear in mind, that a man whom we would banish for his vices might have been conspicuous for his virtues among a barbarous people.

*P.* Do not these form part of the considerations on which I ground my objections to making the Bible a reading-book in schools? I cannot, however, but approve of the discretion with which you have so far selected your illustrations of lessons. There are no other passages in the whole book of Genesis from which children would be likely to take so little harm. There are chapters; the mere proposal to intrude which upon children, is enough to arouse feelings of indignation and disgust. Disapprobation is too mild a term to convey one's sense of such an attempt at contaminating the unprepared and undefended. One's only choice in characterizing the conduct of those who could commit the offence is between condemning them for utter imbecility or for the most desperate wickedness. Have you ever thought of the danger of placing in the hands of children a book surrounded with a halo of sanctity, out of which some chapters are habitually read by them, while others are passed over as confessedly unfit for their perusal? Is not the curiosity of children proverbial? Are you quite sure that children who read selected chapters on the school-floors will not read the tabooed chapters elsewhere?—conscience approving and friends smiling benignantly at such a pious employment of hours at children's own disposal. Oh, the delightful spectacle! They are reading their Bibles!

*T.* We must confess that, even before we became acquainted with you, we had been in the habit of keeping clear of the book of Exodus, and of the larger part of the subsequent books of the Old Testament; in selecting reading-lessons for our children, and have felt annoyed when clergymen and others, to whom we are compelled to yield deference, have insisted on opening the Bible at that terrible book, in order, as they say, to impress upon the children the wonderful power of God, and the mani-

festations of his wrath upon the Egyptians, for daring to hold his chosen people in bondage.

*P.* And whence may have arisen your reluctance to hear the children read out of this book?

*T.* From the conviction that it was quite impossible for them to understand what they read, with a fear that they might misconstrue the little which got beyond a mere impression upon their eyes and ears.

*P.* Did you, or they who forced such reading-lessons upon your children, attempt to ascertain how they reconciled that persistence in hardening the hearts of the Egyptians with the feeling of love and veneration for the Divine goodness and wisdom, which it is your daily effort to breathe into them?

*T.* We never heard them make the attempt, and must confess that the thought of making one never occurred to us. We suspect that the thought of assisting children, with their small and unpractised powers, to reconcile the two, could scarcely enter the head of a rational man. We never met with the child who could be considered capable of fathoming the depths of so awful a mystery, or of rising to the height of the grand purpose which could alone justify in the eyes of an intelligent man the apparently harsh, cruel, and tortuous treatment dealt out to the Egyptians.

*P.* Do you think there might be grounds for apprehending that untrained children, or ill-trained men, might carry away from their perusal of the frightful plagues and bereavements which the Egyptians were made to endure, impressions far from favourable to humane, tender, generous, and forgiving characters in themselves?

*T.* We should have greater fears from another source. We think we might possibly guard against the evil at which you point. We might bring the children to comprehend that they had much to learn before they could be equal to form a judgment upon the ways of God to man.

*P.* Would they not, then, have reason to complain of your prematurely introducing them to the study of His ways—those

of His ways, too, the most difficult to understand? Or would it not be equally culpable to call for unintelligent obedience to His ways, because they "pass all understanding" before time had been afforded to acquire the ordinary breadth and strength of understanding attainable by mortal man?

*T.* And you might say, that if they had not the intelligence to make such a complaint, they could not have the intelligence to understand what they ought to accept, or what they ought to reject, or where humbly to confess their incompetency to grapple with the supernatural. But our fears are not so much for their misapprehending "the ways of God to man," though that would be grievous enough, as for their imbibing false notions about the "ways of man to man."

*P.* Do you mean that thoughtless children might conceive that conduct on their part, which was but a feeble imitation of the wonderful doings of the Almighty, could scarcely be sinful in them?

*T.* The danger which alarms us is much more imminent. When the last and direst plague was about to be inflicted upon the Egyptians, to make them release the Israelites from bondage, a wholesale spoiling, or borrowing without any intention of repayment, was enjoined by God, and practised with alacrity by the Israelites upon the Egyptians.

*P.* Will you read the verses which contain this injunction?

*T.* "And the Lord said unto Moses, yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharoah, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let *you* go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether.

"Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver and jewels of gold.

"And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharoah's servants, and in the sight of the people.

"And the children of Israel did according to the word of

Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

"And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians." (Exodus, chap. xi. v. 1, 2, 3, 35, 36.)

P. I cannot but sympathize in your fears. My attempts to show how education might be made to lead more directly than it has hitherto done to good self-guidance, by teaching what good conduct really is, and by training to the practice of it, have often been treated with derision, as aiming at something above the capacities of children. And the very same people who deride or revile me would subject children to the severe task—a task to which many adults are unequal—of explaining the differences of circumstance and position which could make acts that all christendom would now condemn, excusable and even laudable when perpetrated in Egypt more than 2,000 years ago. Have you a notion that teachers who insist upon forcing such lessons upon children ever think of ascertaining the effect which is produced by them?

T. We have never heard of conversations or examinations as a sequel to such lessons conducted with a view to ascertain the current of thought, if any, produced by them in the children, to strengthen it when running in the right direction, or to correct it where taking a wrong course. We begin to suspect that the most gifted teachers might find their powers overtaxed to guard against misapplication by children of examples of conduct of man to man in a semi-savage state of society approved and commanded by God. Let us read to you five verses of the fifteenth chapter of the book of Numbers:—

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

"And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

"And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

"And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses." (v. 92 to 96.)

P. You would be sorry that any lessons in your schools should predispose the children as they grew up to be men, however zealous you might wish them to be in keeping the sabbath holy, to approve of putting a man to death for picking up sticks, whether on the sabbath of the Jews or on the Sunday of Christians. We have now, I think, interchanged our ideas sufficiently upon the incapacity of children to draw either instruction or religiousness of tone from the Old Testament.

T. We should wish not to pass on to the New Testament without some reference to these two greatest characters in the Old, David and Solomon. It would be quite impossible for us to omit lessons upon them, connecting links, as they are held to be, between the old and the new dispensation—one a man after God's heart, and the other the wisest of men.

P. I am not insensible to the difficulty of your position; but this does not diminish my sense of the impediment presented by the very feebleness of childhood to an appreciation of Scripture-lessons, addressed as they are to men with understandings that have attained to maturity, to be by them imparted to their children in language adapted to modern habits and childish capacities. We are not now in the presence of children in the school-room; nor are your "Christian friends" here to forbid the exercise of our intelligence in deciding how best to impart religious instruction. In the first chapter of St. Matthew the genealogy of Christ is given from Abraham down to Joseph. It is confined to the male side with one remarkable exception: "And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias." (verse 6.) Our attention is thus pointedly drawn to that one of David's wives for whom the greatest of glories was

reserved. I am speaking to men who have read the lives of David and Solomon, who wish to preserve devotional feeling, and at the same time not to part with their intelligence, and who must have felt the strain first upon one and then upon the other. Can a religious teacher bring himself—ought he, to expose the nascent devotion and the immature intelligence of his children to so severe a strain? Ought he not to tremble lest children, filled with admiration for David the “man after God’s heart,” might grow up into men disposed to look with greater indulgence upon some modern David, unprotected by a crown, than he would be likely to meet with from the judge presiding either in the Court of Probate and Divorce or in the Criminal Court?

*T.* It would not be possible—it could not be suffered—it would be too shocking, to subject children to the torture, to expose them to the dangerous consequences of such teaching as you say ought to be an accompaniment of Bible-lessons.

*P.* Would it not be more shocking to expose them to the much more dangerous consequences of giving Bible-lessons unaccompanied by it?

*T.* You cannot conceal from yourself that most of those who are engaged in the work of education would condemn the style of instruction recommended by you as a direct attempt to undermine all respect for the patriarchs and other godly men of old.

*P.* I should be prepared for the condemnation of your “good Christian” friends, based as it would be upon a misconception and misrepresentation of my aims in teaching.

*T.* But leaving aside our friends, whom you delight in calling “good Christians,” can you doubt that the tendency of your teaching would be to weaken in the young their reverence for the great Bible characters?

*P.* Whatever the tendency may be, it is the tendency, not of my teaching, but of other people’s teaching, accompanied by my correction of it.

*T.* But if their teaching, unaccompanied by your corrections,

would not be followed by those consequences, must not the consequences be charged to your corrections, that is, to your teaching?

*P.* Supposing your friends to be right in their inferences—a matter which I have no thoughts of examining just now—we should be in this position: I am convinced, and you know the grounds on which I justify my conviction, that Bible-lessons, unaccompanied by examinations to bring out the impressions made upon the children, might lead them to take as examples of “good and holy living” to be imitated in the present day, the Patriarchs, and other godly men of old. Your friends, we will say, are no less convinced that Bible-lessons, with the accompaniments suggested by me, would undermine the respect that ought to be felt for the Patriarchs—godly men of sacred writ. Granting that one of these dangers must be encountered in order to obtain security against the other, which appears to you the more formidable?

*T.* The one that you would guard against—practically, at least—as bearing upon modern conduct.

*P.* You should not, after the pains that I have taken, fall in with the misrepresentations of your friends. I am sure you do so unintentionally. I would do more than guard against one danger: I would guard against both dangers, by deferring instruction in the Bible for maturer years, when intelligence will be sufficiently matured to appreciate the characters of the Patriarchs, or godly men of old, without being led to adopt them as models for conduct in our own times.

*T.* You make us shudder. We wonder that the baneful impressions likely to be left upon the minds of children through forcing them prematurely upon such reading, should not have occurred to those who ought to be ever on the watch to preserve children from trials beyond their strength. But do you really think, from what you have been able to observe, that evils are to be met with in society sufficiently aggravated to confirm the reasonableness of your apprehensions?

*P.* It is no easy matter to establish off-hand the causes



which have produced our present state of society, with its mixture of good and evil. We cannot help admitting that this state of society, as we see it, is the effect of many causes, one of which is the education given to the young. Neither can we help admitting that this state of society presents to our view exhibitions of conduct, many of them far from creditable, which greatly impair the general well-being. Look at Mormonism, the latest off-shoot of Christianity! look at the extent of the social evil! look at the number of illegitimate children! read the reports of proceedings in our courts of law! Can you feel confident that the adult state of mind which makes those things possible may not have been partly formed by a familiar contemplation of the lives of men, not wholly unsanctified, to whom polygamy and concubinage, and much besides that is repugnant to modern, and I suppose I may say improved notions of religious and virtuous conduct, were not forbidden?

T. We have always heard these plague-spots spoken of as consequences of the depravity of human nature — inevitable; not as consequences of misdirected education—avoidable by the improvements which you are insisting upon.

P. Again: can you expect to succeed in conveying to your children a vivid and deep impression of the wisdom of Solomon—wisdom, which, to claim our love and admiration, must be exemplified in good conduct; taking at the same time adequate precautions that they shall not fall into the delusion that if a Solomon were to come among us now, knowing no more than the son of David knew, and living as he lived, he could be esteemed either as the wisest or the best of men?

T. You have given us much to reflect upon. We are certainly not prepared to deny the reasonableness of all that you have placed before us. At the same time it is too greatly at variance with all that we have hitherto accepted as unquestionable, and acted up to as irreproachable, to admit of our surrendering our opinions or wishing to alter our methods of teaching, without much further consideration. One thing we can see clearly. Should we come over to your views, so far as

we understand them, we should never dare to speak as you do. We should be denounced as infidels or atheists.

*P.* Neither are you required. You have entered upon a great work. The conditions under which alone you are allowed to perform it, do not all meet your approval. Some of them thwart your efforts. You may, for want of better accommodation, be compelled to teach in a vitiated atmosphere. Is it not a blessing to your little scholars, that their master is alive to their danger and ever on the watch to protect them? In like manner, you may be compelled to mix deleterious matter with your instruction. Is it not a blessing to your little scholars, that their master, knowing the distinction between the poisonous and the wholesome, is also capable of administering the antidotes, and watchful to do so—the next best thing to that which is not permitted to him, the exclusion of the poison?

*T.* Your notion is, that we are not responsible for the circumstances in which we are placed to exercise our calling, but that we are responsible to act in them as well as we can for the children. But so dreadful an imputation as that of atheism is difficult to be borne.

*P.* Good men have been calumniated before your time and have survived, turning from their calumniators with feelings partly of contempt, partly of pity. "Not that which goeth into the mouth, but that which cometh out, defileth the man."

*T.* A calumny like this might deprive us of bread as well as of the opportunity of doing such service as we are capable of. You must know how readily people listen to criminations of infidelity and atheism, against those who are suspected of even a leaning to biblical criticism.

*P.* It so happens, that in what we are discussing there is no question of biblical criticism. My remarks would be quite as apposite as they are, supposing them to be apposite at all, with the admission that the whole of the Bible, without exception, was inspired, and therefore incontrovertible. I simply maintain that it never was intended to be placed in the hands of children; that so to place it is a desecration of the Bible

itself; that children are altogether unprepared for its perusal; and that it must be positively damaging to them till they are prepared. I will say the same of many things besides the Bible. Do we not religiously exclude children from thousands of things which it is for their good to be indulged with in their riper years? Do we trust them with fire, with edged tools, with watches? Are we unbelievers in fire, in edged tools, and in watches, if we do not? And if so, might we not, imitating them in their fatuity and recklessness, turn round on your "Christian calumniators," and accuse them of atheism for declining to allow Bibles to take the place of baubles in the hands and mouths of their infants? Or rather, not choosing to imitate them, might we not enter a caution, that a Bible should no more be placed in the hands of a child incapable of appreciating the doctrines of eternity, than a watch in the hands of one incapable of telling the progress of the current of time?

*T.* Should we, on subsequent reflection, find ourselves compelled to coincide in your views, do you think we could conscientiously retain our posts in schools where Bible-lessons are insisted upon?

*P.* The decision upon what you can conscientiously do must rest with yourselves. Be mine the task alone of helping you to the considerations which ought to guide your decision. Your lot is, in many respects, similar to that of other men. You have to work; and why do you work?

*T.* For the same reason that other men work; to earn the means of subsistence.

*P.* That may be called the fundamental reason for all work. But when that stage of civilization has been reached, in which each man engages in some particular profession or business, a secondary thought takes possession of the mind, not to the exclusion of the primary or fundamental, but for its fulfilment. Thus, the farmer is occupied with the thought how best to cultivate his farm, the captain how best to navigate his ship, the architect how best to design a building, the physician how

.. . . .

best to cure his patient, and so forth ; and what, shall we say, is the thought which occupies your minds ?

*T.* How best to conduct our schools, so as to send forth from them boys most likely to become self-supporting, and otherwise well-conducted men.

*P.* Now, if a farmer should be tied down by his landlord to an antiquated mode of cultivation, which he knows to be injudicious, ought he to surrender his lease and abandon his farm as soon as his contract admits of his doing so ?

*P.* He is at liberty, but not bound to do so. He will not covenant to pay the same rent to such a landlord that he would to one who left him at liberty to cultivate to the best of his ability ; and it is the reduction in the rent which induces him to submit to raise smaller crops than he knows he might. If the opportunity were offered, he might be glad of holding under a wiser landlord. Meanwhile he will cultivate his farm as well as the circumstances in which he is placed will admit.

*P.* And if the shipowner impose upon his captain conditions for navigating his vessel, select seasons, and engage freights, which greatly diminish the chances of rapid and profitable voyages, ought the captain to throw up his command ?

*T.* Again, we should say he is at liberty, but not bound to do so. He might not readily be able to obtain another command. All that can be required of him is to do his duty as well as his owner will permit him.

*P.* And if an architect, capable of designing the most commodious of houses, is required by his employer to comply with whims innumerable, making the house of half its value to all but its owner, ought he to refuse the employment ?

*T.* We must repeat our former answer.

*P.* And if a physician, after a few visits to his patient, find him living in an unwholesome atmosphere, which he will not or cannot quit, harassed by the state of his affairs, which he cannot mend, but which is weighing him down with anxiety, or a slave to habits too strong for him to contend against, ought he to discontinue his visits ?

## ON THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A SCHOOL-BOOK.

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*T.* THERE are some among us who think with you, that the Old Testament ought not to be put into the hands of children at all, and who are still more strongly of opinion that reading-lessons ought not to be drawn from its pages. We don't know that their reasons for wishing to have the Old Testament excluded from their schools are the same as yours. People, as you know, and teachers in particular, are not very free in talking on such matters. Lessons from the New Testament, and especially from the Gospels, as containing all the teachings as well as the life of Christ, are not only given, but, we think we may say, would be given by most of us, if left to act entirely on our own responsibility.

*P.* That will make the work which you have asked of me comparatively easy.

*T.* May we understand that you do not object to the teaching of the Christian religion in our schools?

*P.* I should like to hear it taught. You should then judge whether I had any aversion to it. At present, my objection is to the delusion that the reading of the New Testament, without note or comment, is teaching the Christian religion.

*T.* Do you approve that the children should be catechized? Are you not aware that the attempt to impose catechisms is one of the chief causes of the dissensions now distracting the educational world?

*P.* I am quite aware of that. But I cannot avoid recognizing, among those who insist upon catechisms, the wish to ascertain what impressions have been left upon the children

from their scripture lessons. I may dissent from their method of catechizing, but I will not commit the injustice of confounding them with the "good Christians," who insist upon scripture-reading in schools, unaccompanied by note or comment.

*T.* We are surprised: we never expected to find you an approver or even a tolerator of catechisms.

*P.* If you mean by catechism a series of questions and answers, to be learnt by rote and repeated, you may dismiss your surprise; because catechism, in that sense, has no more of my approval than the reading of solemn lessons, without an attempt to ascertain what besides the words has been left in the memory.

*T.* As we never heard of any other kind of catechism, our surprise was occasioned by supposing you to approve of that.

*P.* I respect, in attempts at catechizing, an acknowledgment that some pains ought to be taken to ascertain what traces have been left with the children after the words had departed from their lips, and the sounds died away from their ears. How can I fail to contrast the disposition evinced by such an attempt, abortive though it be, with that of the "good Christians," who actually plume themselves upon their liberality, upon their love of religious toleration, because they leave doctrines of any kind to be accepted by children as "Christian doctrine?"

*T.* We are not a little embarrassed and distressed by your criticisms on a practice with which we have been familiar, and which we have not thought quite so heinous as it appears to you. In claiming the performance of your promise, we hope you will favour us with some specimens of the style of catechism which you would adopt if conducting a class in lessons from the Gospels.

*P.* Not forgetting that, in my opinion, children are unequal to grappling with the difficulties of a subject far above them, but which cannot be slurred over with impunity.

*T.* We are quite prepared. You hold that a certain style of self-catechizing, or catechizing by others, ought to accompany

the reading of the scriptures, and that children are unprepared for either.

*P.* Our object, then, let it be borne in mind, is to ascertain whether the Gospels, used as reading-lessons, are adapted to help children to a perception of the line of conduct which they ought to pursue on quitting school, and to call forth in them a sense of responsibility perpetually urging them to pursue that line.

*T.* That is exactly what we wish. How shall we begin? We ought to take cognizance of so much of the Gospels as may fairly be said to comprise an epitome of the duties of man to man, and of the precepts and injunctions bearing upon and enforcing them.

*P.* Suppose we take the Sermon on the Mount, as given in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. You read a verse or a few verses at a time, and I will follow you with some of the many questions which ought, as I think, to be put by teachers, in order to ascertain the impression made by the words upon all scholars, who are reading the Scriptures with them for the purposes of religious instruction. You will then have some materials to help you to decide whether the scriptures ought to be read without such catechizing, and whether school-children can possibly be ripe for it.

*T.* That course seems admirably adapted to bring out the very difficulty about which we are desirous of being enlightened. We hope it may lead to our enlightenment in other respects also.

*P.* We can afterwards, if you wish it, discuss together, and endeavour to form some opinion upon, the impression likely to be produced from the reading of the whole sermon on the understandings of children who have not picked up, from your other teaching, knowledge and habits of good self-government. Let me again remind you, however, to avoid even an approach to misapprehension between us, that I feel, as strongly as anybody, how foolish it would be to expect from children appropriate answers to the questions which I am about to submit for your consideration. But I contend that it is worse than

foolish—that it is actually wicked—to put the scriptures into the hands of people who are not, at least, qualified to engage in rational conversation and discussion upon them, if unprepared to deal satisfactorily with some portions of them. In other words, my conviction is, that the perusal of the scriptures should be preceded by instruction which will prepare those on whom the privilege is bestowed to search for becoming answers to all my questions, allowing that they might not invariably find them.

*T. (read.)* “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Chap. v. verse 3.)

*P.* Who are the poor in spirit among your relations, friends, and acquaintances, the people whom you see and of whom you hear? The firemen, who mount the fire-escapes; the boatmen, who launch the life-boat; the sister of charity, who courageously visits the abode of sickness and contagion; the boy, who takes up the quarrel of the injured and helpless, who boldly acknowledges a fault to meet its consequences, and avows an opinion however unacceptable? Or the man, who shrinks from the danger to which he is summoned by the call of duty, leans upon the opinions of others and attempts to form none of his own; and the boy, who hides his faults at the risk of seeing the consequences of them fastened upon another? And to which of these is the kingdom of heaven reserved? What is the meaning of being “blessed?” Happy, cheerful, contented at the moment? or looking forward to such a state of feeling at a future time, in compensation for present privation, suffering, or affliction, courageously and unrepiningly endured?

*T.* “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (v. 4.)

*P.* Ought people to strive to guard one another from disease and death? from loss and want? from fire and theft? from ignorance, carelessness, and bad habits, likely to lead into all of them? Which are more likely to mourn,—those who perform these duties to themselves and others, or they who neglect them? Which will need comfort? and out of those who need it, which will receive it, or will all, and how?



*T.* "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (v. 5.)

*P.* What is meant by inheritance? What is the advantage of inheriting the earth? Is the earth a better inheritance now than it was formerly? and why? Whose children are most likely to inherit the earth? Are their children specially meek? Ought the words "meek," "inherit," and "earth," to be interpreted literally, according to the meaning common among us now, or figuratively? and how?

*T.* "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." (v. 6.)

*P.* What is meant by "hunger," and "thirst," and "righteousness"? What are the signs by which we may judge whether others hunger and thirst after righteousness, and by which we may recognize whether we ourselves hunger and thirst after it? How will they be filled? and with what? Who may most reasonably expect to be filled? The diligent or the slothful? the thrifty or the wasteful? the intelligent or the ignorant? the honest or the dishonest? the brave or the cowardly? Are the hunger and thirst here spoken of better to be estimated by words or by deeds?

*T.* "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (v. 7.)

*P.* Who are the merciful? Who are the persons who most need mercy? Are the magistrates who condemn, or they who pardon, the guilty, merciful? and why? Which policemen are merciful? Ought the disturbers of society to be resisted and prevented? Can you state the difference of the effect upon society between treating them mercifully and justly?

*T.* "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (v. 8.)

*P.* What is meant by "pure in heart"? How are people to become pure in heart, and to remain so? Can people do wrong or neglect to do right, and be pure in heart? What is doing wrong? Did slaveholders do wrong? Did duellists do

wrong? Did the judges, who tortured criminals and condemned witches to death, do wrong? Do parents who neglect their children do wrong? Do the rich who revel in luxury while the children of their poverty-stricken neighbours are neglected, do wrong? Will they ever see God?

*T.* "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." (v. 9.)

*P.* Who are peacemakers? Who are peace-breakers? What may cause some boys to grow up into peacemaking men, and others into peace-breaking men? Can children provide for themselves the treatment which is to help them to grow up into peacemakers? Who ought to provide it? If they do not, will they be called the children of God? Do some people seem by their conduct indifferent whether they deserve to be called children of God? Who are they? How do they talk, as well as act?

*T.* "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (v. 10.)

*P.* Among the persons who in various periods of our history have been apprehended, convicted, fined, imprisoned, mutilated, burnt, and hung, how can we distinguish which were persecuted for righteousness' sake, and which were condemned for their evil deeds? Do we judge of all these now as our forefathers judged? Why, or why not? Are as many persons persecuted now for righteousness' sake as formerly? Are fewer persons blessed, and will the kingdom of Heaven be to fewer progressively as persecution diminishes?

*T.* "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." (v. 11.)

*P.* Ought people to keep away from those who would revile and speak falsely of them? Ought pains to be taken to guard against in ourselves, and to prevent in others, a disposition to revile and persecute and speak falsely? Will people be more or less blessed, according as they take these pains?

*T.* "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your

reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (v. 12.)

*P.* Who are told to rejoice ? and why ? In what circumstances do men generally rejoice ? When people are reviled and spoken ill of, how are we to know whether they are reviled falsely or not ? Are thieves and swindlers spoken ill of falsely ? Were so-called heretics spoken ill of falsely ? Are nations which leave their destitute unrelieved, and children uneducated, spoken ill of falsely ?

*T.* "Ye are the salt of the earth : but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men." (v. 13.)

*P.* What people are compared to the salt of the earth ? and why ? What may cause them to be cast out ?

*T.* "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." (v. 14.)

*P.* Who are here said to be the light of the world ? What kind of people do we now consider to be the light of the world ?

*T.* "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candle-stick ; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (v. 15, 16.)

*P.* In what spirit ought people to do good works, so that the light may shine upon them ? How may men hope to glorify God ? When men praise Him much and do little or no good to man, what does the light shine upon ?

*T.* "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (v. 17.)

*P.* What was the law ? and who were the prophets ? What kind of law is that which ought not to be destroyed ? Can any effort be required for the fulfilment of prophecy ? Do people prophesy now ? What is the distinction between foretelling

and prophesying? Have we retained all the laws that were in force among our forefathers? and why not? When a law is repealed is it destroyed? What would our present state be, if we had not emancipated ourselves from some of our old laws?

*T.* "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." (v. 18.)

*P.* What is meant by "heaven," and its passing? and what law is that which is not yet fulfilled, but will be fulfilled? Is it meant that heaven will pass, and if not, is it meant that earth will pass?

*T.* "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (v. 19.)

*P.* What are the commandments here referred to? Are they always taught in the same sense by different men? How are we to distinguish right from wrong teaching? Is not the attempt to rectify the interpretation and teaching of them frequently condemned as the breaking of them? Who is the more likely to break a commandment—he who accepts it to be blindly obeyed, as interpreted in an age of barbarism, fixed and unalterable; or he who accepts it, deeply impressed with a sense of the duty imposed upon him to examine it by the light of that superior intelligence, the growth of ages, which has been bequeathed to him, to use in his own generation, and to hand down improved to his children?

*T.* "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (v. 20.)

*P.* What is righteousness? What was the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees? How can we tell whether our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees? Were the pharisees rich men, living apparently very little disturbed by the poverty and suffering in the

midst of which they dwelt ? Were they men professing doctrines and living in utter disregard of them, touchy if charged with not believing what they professed, but, laughing to scorn or attacking with violence him who summoned them to act up to the tenets of their religion as construed by themselves ? Are there any pharisees now, and if so, why do they seem undismayed and indifferent to the warning that they are risking exclusion from heaven ?

T. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill ; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment :

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (v. 21, 22.)

P. Is it forbidden to kill in any circumstances ? or what will, and what will not, justify killing ? What is the judgment of which we are warned here ? May a man be angry with his brother with cause ? and how can we know for certain whether anger be with or without cause ? What is meant by "Raca" ? and what is "council," which is something more terrible than "judgment," but less fierce than "hell-fire" ? Where is hell, with its fire ? And how are they reconcilable with Divine wisdom and goodness ?

T. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee ;

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (v. 23, 24.)

P. What gifts used people to take to the altar in former times ? and why ? What gifts are taken to the altar in modern times ? Is prayer a gift ? Is praise a gift ? When a rich man approaches the altar with prayer and praise, leaving destitution unrelieved, and ignorance unenlightened, has his brother aught against him, and would he do well to leave his

prayer and praise, and go his way to be reconciled to his brother ?

*T.* "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him ; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

"Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (v. 25, 26.)

*P.* Is an adversary always sure to be in the right ? when not, ought we to yield to him or to resist him ? If he be in the right, what other reasons are there for yielding to him, besides the fear of being delivered to the judge and the officer, to be cast into prison ? Does the threat here sanction imprisonment for debt ? or why do you think that it does not ?

*T.* "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery :

"But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after [her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart." (v. 27, 28.)

*P.* These verses are so evidently unfit for children, that I refrain from proposing the questions which ought certainly to be put to adults. This is one of the cases in which words without meaning are better fitted for children than words with meaning. Better than either, that such words should be withheld from them altogether.

*T.* "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (v. 29, 30.)

*P.* Are the expressions "right eye" and "right hand" meant to be taken literally, or how ? Would it be a wise proceeding to pluck out a damaged eye, or to cut off a wounded

hand? How ought we to interpret this allusion to the possibility of our bodies being cast into hell?

*T.* "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." (v. 31, 32.)

*P.* Surely the topics here referred to cannot, with any propriety, be deliberately forced upon children. Would not a decent mother blush if her boys, fresh from school, where their curiosity had been excited but not gratified, asked her to explain what was meant by fornication and adultery, and whether divorced women were ever married in these days?

*T.* "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

"But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

"Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

"Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

"But let your communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." (v. 33 to 37.)

*P.* How are the practices in our courts of law and houses of Parliament reconcilable with these prohibitions? If the ceremony of being sworn ought to be maintained, in what form is it to be justified? If people ought not to swear by heaven, nor by earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by one's head, may they swear by other things unenumerated? and if so, by what things? Is the New Testament less God's book than the heaven His throne, or the earth His footstool?

*T.* "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth:

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (v. 38, 39.)

P. Would it be possible for society to exist, if its well-disposed members acted upon the literal interpretation of the words "Resist not evil" ? How could we get on without police and an armed force ? What is to be thought of the understandings of those who accept these injunctions in their literal sense, and yet never think of acting up to them ? or of their consciences, if they pretend to accept of them ?

T. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." (v. 40, 41.)

P. What would become of all our industrial arrangements, if these injunctions were interpreted literally and obeyed accordingly ? If it be impossible to do that, what interpretation is to be put upon them, so that we may regulate our daily life by them scrupulously and reverentially ?

T. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away." (v. 42.)

P. Ought we not on all occasions to perform good deeds, and refrain from evil deeds ? Would a man always do good, were he to give to every one that asked of him ? Might he not sometimes be doing much evil ? Ought a man to give, regardless of the consequences of his giving ? When the application is to borrow, ought a man to lend, indifferent whether the borrower is likely to be able, or even means, to repay him ? What would such a lender be encouraging ? What may this verse mean ? What do you feel sure it cannot mean ?

T. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy ;

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you :



"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (v. 48, 44, 45.)

*P.* In what sense ought people to love their enemies? Ought invaders and robbers to be kept at bay? Who are the enemies of the good? Ought criminals to be confined and subjected to reformatory discipline? Explain in other words how we may hope to be the children of our Father which is in heaven. Does he make no distinction between the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, because he maketh the sun to shine and the rain to fall equally on both? In what way ought we to pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us? How should we set about doing them good and blessing them?

*T.* "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (v. 46, 47.)

*P.* Is it no reward, to strengthen the love towards us of those who love us, by trying to deserve their love? Is not the cultivation of feelings of good-will sure to bring its reward in self-improvement? Ought ingratitude to be lightly thought of? Whom do little children love? Whom can they not be brought to love? How are they to be taught to distinguish between good and bad, and led to cling to the one and shun the other? In what respect will this influence their conduct towards the doers of good and the doers of evil?

*T.* "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (v. 48.)

*P.* The concluding verse of this chapter has justly been considered as offering to the intelligent and devout student of Scripture the key whereby to interpret seeming obscurities, and reconcile seeming contradictions; but the intelligent student must be more than a mere child. What is the perfection of the Father? How are we to fit ourselves to appreciate

His infinite goodness and wisdom? How to reconcile them with the existence of evil and His infinite power? How far can reason carry us? and where must we fall down humbly, contented to adore? How can we guard ourselves while bowing to His will, from falling into a base and sluggish subservience to men presuming to speak in His name? Is it piety or impiety, faith or infidelity, to accept interpretations of isolated passages of Scripture inconsistent with Divine perfection? Which will bring us nearer to His perfection—to reject all interpretation at variance with Divine wisdom and goodness, or to accept such blindly and negligently, as though truth concerned us not?

T. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

"Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (chap. vi. v. 1 to 4.)

P. What is meant by "alms"? Is indiscriminate almsgiving, even in secret, the "alms" here recommended? Is the relief afforded by our poor-laws, although given openly, meant to be reprov'd? Are schools, established by the wealthier adults for the children of their poorer neighbours, unavoidably and even desirably public, among the alms discountenanced? Which community might be supposed to contain the greater proportion of hypocrites,—that in which there is abundant educational provision to teach and train all children, so that they may keep themselves as men clear from destitution, temptation, and wickedness, and poor-laws to relieve the wretchedness which education had been unable to prevent; or that in which these matters are neglected or so imperfectly attended to, as

that beggars should crowd the thoroughfares, squalid poverty crouch unrelieved in the alleys, and half-clad, ill-fed, and untaught children, ripen under "Christian" eyes for the prison and the gallows, unless cut off by early death?

*T.* "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (v. 5, 6.)

*P.* How are we to distinguish the hypocrites here inveighed against? Do they frequent our churches and chapels, as they did the synagogues of old? Who is a hypocrite? What is he who makes promises which he never thinks of performing? who professes with his lips what he disavows by his conduct? who not only lies to himself, countenanced by those who also lie, and lies to his God, if he can be supposed to acknowledge one, but is so indifferent about his words as to be unconscious whether he lie or not, while addressing Him whom he professes to love, to honour, and to obey?

*T.* "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking:

"Be not ye, therefore, like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." (v. 7, 8.)

*P.* Wherein do our churches and chapels differ from the temples of the heathen in regard to "vain repetitions?" Does anything take place in them that might be construed as insulting to Divine wisdom, and derogatory to Divine goodness? Who most resemble the heathen? they who refuse to enter a church or chapel till assured that heathenish practices have no admittance there, or they who rush helter-

shelter into them, regardless of "vain repetitions" approaching to mockery, and forgetful of the admonition of Him who said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him" ?

T. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (v. 9, 10.)

P. What kingdom is that which is not yet come? How is God's will done in heaven? Must it be known in order to be done? What is His will in earth? How is His will to be learned? Will not the repetition of that prayer by people who do not strive to learn His will, in order to do it, be a "vain repetition" ?

T. "Give us this day our daily bread." (v. 11.)

P. Does God give daily bread to all who ask it? Does He give it alike to the idle and industrious? to the ignorant and intelligent? to the wasteful and saving? to the drunken and sober? to the dishonest and honest? What is to be thought of the man who prays regularly for his daily bread, heedless of the qualities and conduct in himself by which his prayer will find favour? What must be supplied by others to children to enable them to possess the qualities and to practise the conduct through which prayers for daily bread will be listened to? What is to be thought of rich men, confident of having their own daily bread, and offering up daily prayers for it, careless whether the children around are obtaining that without which the expectation of daily bread for them as men is hopeless?

T. "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." (v. 12.)

P. What are the debts here asked to be forgiven? In asking that they may be forgiven, are we conscious that we are earnestly striving not to incur others like unto them? Is it for the good of society that some debts should be incurred? and how are they to be distinguished from debts which ought not to be incurred? Ought both or either to

be forgiven or paid? Do we always forgive our debtors? When ought we, and when ought we not? And when ought we to hope for forgiveness?

*T.* "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (v. 18.)

*P.* Who are most exposed to temptation? What must we do while we pray, so as not to be led into temptation? If we pray and omit to do that which is needful, in order to keep out of temptation, is such prayer self-improving? Who are responsible for keeping children out of temptation, and for so educating them that they may not be led into temptation as men? If they who should protect children disregard this duty, what is the worth of their prayer "not to be led into temptation"? In what respect does it differ from "vain repetition"? May they expect to be delivered from evil? and will the words "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory," from such lips, be acceptable homage or fulsome flattery?

*T.* "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (v. 14, 15.)

*P.* What is meant by trespasses? Ought policemen, or magistrates, or judges or jurymen, to forgive trespasses? Will they be forgiven? Why are not the trespasses of engine-drivers, captains of ships, and others in responsible situations, forgiven? What is done with drunken, dishonest servants? with pickpockets and burglars? How can they be forgiven consistently with what is owing to the sober, and honest, and well-conducted, and the aged, and children, who demand our tender care and protection?

*T.* "Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face :

"That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (v. 16 to 18.)

*P.* What is meant by "fast"? Why ought people to fast? When ought they to fast? Are men beholden to do any thing which] is not for their good? What is the reward which hypocrites are said to have? Why should people who fast anoint their heads? and how will they be rewarded openly? Are some manners and customs adapted for all climates, and others for particular ages and climates? Are fasting and anointing to be considered among the former or the latter? What are the essentials to be observed so as not to incur the reproach of hypocrisy?

*T.* "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." (v. 19.)

*P.* How do rich men reconcile their conduct with this injunction? and do they succeed in reconciling it, in your estimation? How must these words be interpreted, so as to justify the conduct of rich men? or how must the conduct of rich men be modified to harmonize with a different interpretation? Ought men to abstain from building houses, because thieves break into them? or from weaving garments, because moths consume them? or from making implements and tools, because rust corrodes them?

*T.* "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal :

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (v. 20, 21.)

*P.* What are the treasures here referred to? and who disposes of them? How is it possible for a man to gain access to them? May he not live in a house, and possess furniture, raiment, implements, and tools, without losing his

chance of treasures in heaven? Who mostly obtain possession of earthly treasures—the industrious, intelligent, sober, saving and trustworthy? or the indolent, ignorant, drunken, wasteful, and dishonest? Which of the two are best able and best disposed to benefit their neighbours? To which of the two, through many ages, do we owe it that the land in which we live is covered with houses, hospitals, schools, and other buildings, with roads and canals, and materials in every stage of preparation, so as to admit of our living in comfort and thankfulness? Which of the two may we suppose to be destined to obtain possession of treasure in heaven?

*T.* “The light of the body is the eye: if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light:

“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (v. 22, 23.)

*P.* What is the kind of light here alluded to? and of the darkness? When is an eye single, and when is it not? How can any light be properly represented as darkness?

*T.* “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” (v. 24.)

*P.* In what sense is it that a man cannot serve two masters? Who or what is Mammon? Have you ever heard Mammon spoken of as synonymous with “riches?” and care for riches as equivalent to an absence of care for God? Ought riches to be cared for? Which of two men possessed of riches may be supposed to serve God best?—he who cares for his riches, and uses them in doing good, or he who despises and squanders them, and sinks into dependance upon the riches of others?

*T.* “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (v. 25.)

*P.* Which is the preferable state of society—that where there is abundance of the necessities and comforts of life, or that where scarcity and destitution prevail? What qualities in its members are likely to lead to each of these states of society? In which of these will men be taking most thought for their lives and for their bodies? Why should men be heedless of meat and raiment, because life is more than meat, and the body than raiment?

*P.* “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (v. 26.)

*P.* To what state would men be shortly reduced, if they ceased to sow, to reap, and to gather into barns? Would their heavenly Father feed them? In what respect are men better than the fowls of the air? Can fowls sow and reap? Why should men cease to sow and reap, because birds can do neither, and therefore do neither?

*T.* “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

“And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” (v. 27, 28, 29.)

*P.* Because people by thought cannot add to their stature—that is, cannot do impossibilities, ought they not to do by thought what is possible for the maintenance of themselves and others? What would be the consequence if all people, by misapplying these words, were to relinquish the thought of accomplishing what is possible, because the attempt to accomplish impossibilities savours of madness? Ought people to take thought of raiment? Why, or why not? What influence ought to be exercised over their judgment, and hence over their conduct, by the reflection that the lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin?

*T.* “Wherefore, if God clothe the grass of the field, which



to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? " (v. 30.)

*P.* In what sense is the word "clothe" used here ? How does God clothe men and women ? What must they do to deserve to be clothed ? When people work for their clothing, how do they show their faith ? When they neglect to work, pretending to rely, or ignorantly and unwarrantably relying, upon God, how do they show their want or misdirection of faith ?

*T.* "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed ?

"(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (v. 31, 32.)

*P.* What thought must people have taken, in order to be able to "take no thought" about what they shall eat and what they shall put on ? What must we do in order to live and to be able to assist others to live ? Can we get wherewith to feed and clothe ourselves without working skilfully and intelligently, and saving carefully ? and how can these things be done without thought ? How did you acquire this knowledge ? In what respects ought Jew and Gentile to think and do alike ? and in what respects may they think and act differently ?

*T.* "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you." (v. 33.)

*P.* What are the "kingdom of God," and "His righteousness," which people are commanded to seek *first* ? Is earth part of the kingdom of God ? and where is man to exert himself while seeking the kingdom of God ? What are "these things" which will be added if men seek "His righteousness" ? What kind of people generally obtain these things, and may they be presumed to have been seeking the kingdom of God ? When must people begin to acquire knowledge and form good habits ? Can the kingdom of God be reached, or His righteous-

ness be reposed in, or will all these things be added, without good habits ?

*T.* "Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (v. 34.)

*P.* Can the "kingdom of God" be reached without thought ? Reconcile this with the preceding verse. Show how both verses are to be interpreted so as to avoid countenancing apparent contradictions, or wild and incoherent injunctions, obedience to the whole of which is impossible. If anybody rise from reading God's laws with justifications in his thoughts of acts leading to misery, and of lessons enjoining bad and foolish conduct : whence does he obtain his justifications ? from God's laws, or from his own misconceptions and perversions of them ?

*T.* "Judge not, that ye be not judged." (chap. vii. v. 1.)

*P.* To whom are these words addressed, and in what sense ? What would be the consequence to society, if the practice of judging were to cease among judges, magistrates, fathers, mothers, and schoolmasters ? Is it not desirable that boys should judge rightly of their school-fellows and companions, and behave towards them accordingly ? Ought the society of the bad to be avoided ? And how are the bad to be distinguished from the good ? If criminals judge not, shall they not be judged ?

*T.* "For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (v. 2.)

*P.* Bring forth the profound wisdom contained in these texts, and vindicate it from the misrepresentations of vain and foolish men. With what judgment ought people to judge ? How is righteous to be distinguished from unrighteous judgment ? By whose judgment shall we be judged, and by whose measure will it be measured unto us ? Will His judgment and His measure be regulated by the foolish judgments and false measures of man ?

*T.* "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?

"Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye ; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye ?

"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (v. 3, 4, 5.)

*P.* What corrupting and misleading tendency is here meant to be rebuked and repressed ? Which is the more common, to blame another or one's self ? Which is the more improving ? what must be the first step to improve or benefit others ? How is the course of that man or that nation likely to end, where the effort is to correct others, self-correction being overlooked ? Will others attend to such correction, or have faith in such correctors ? Will they attribute any activity of exertion or display of zeal so directed, to love of one's neighbour or of mankind, or to self-glorification ? And by whom will such pretentious benefactors of others be denounced as hypocrites ?

*T.* "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (v. 6.)

*P.* What is here meant by "holy" ? and why are people enjoined not to give what is holy to dogs ? What is intended by this figurative expression of casting pearls before swine ? Are the Scriptures holy ? Are all people capable of distinguishing the pearls above all price which are in them ? Who give what is holy to dogs, and cast pearls before swine ?—they who scatter the Scriptures among men and children indiscriminately ; or they who withhold the Scriptures from children for a time, preparing them meanwhile to understand, to appreciate, to reverence, and to cherish, what is excellent, so as to make sure of their profiting by them when men ? Who are more likely to trample the Scriptures under their feet, and

to turn round on their would-be benefactors?—they who can distinguish their pearl-like value, or they who, scorning pearls, are enraged at being deprived of their accustomed husks?

*T.* “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (v. 7, 8.)

*P.* In what sense is it that all who ask receive; that all who seek find; and that it is opened to all who knock? How can we judge whether we are asking so as to receive, seeking so as to find, or knocking so as that it will be opened to us?

*T.* “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

“Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?” (v. 9, 10.)

*P.* What is pointed at in this allusion to giving a child a stone in the place of bread, or a serpent instead of a fish? What instances can you produce of people who are remorselessly guilty of conduct quite as reprehensible as that of which it is supposed no parent would be guilty? Ought teachers to act like parents to children in all respects? or in what respects? What ought teachers to give to children? How do teachers hold communication with children? Which most resembles a stone, and which most resembles bread—words conveying no meaning, or words conveying instruction that nourisheth the soul? Which may appositely be compared to a fish, and which to a serpent—words with meanings carefully weighed and easily assimilated so as to contribute to a healthy growth of the intelligence, and a right direction of the feelings; or words given forth at random with no fixed meaning, and thereby easily pervertible to poisonous uses?

*T.* “If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (v. 11.)

*P.* Does a good father give to his children what they ask for because they think it good? or does he only give what

he thinks good for them? Are all men capable of distinguishing the good from the bad? If through ignorance they ask for what is bad, thinking it good, will it be given to them? If they ask for what is good, taking no pains to deserve it, will it be given to them?

*T.* "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (v. 12.)

*P.* How must these words be construed, so as to harmonize with duties unquestioned by all thoughtful men, and not to offend against the "perfection of wisdom"? How ought judges and sheriffs to act towards criminals? How ought juries to act towards prisoners on their trials? At what prices ought dealers to sell? At what prices ought they to wish to buy? At what rate of interest ought capitalists to lend? At what rate ought they to wish to borrow? What rent ought landlords to ask and take, and at what rents ought tenants to seek to occupy? What is here meant by "the law and the prophets"?

*T.* "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (v. 13, 14.)

*P.* What is meant by "destruction"? and by "life"? Why is the gate that leadeth to destruction said to be wide? Why is the gate that leadeth to life said to be strait? Have these verses been differently construed by different people? In what respect will the interpretation of them affect your flow of thoughts concerning the happiness of your future destiny? How will it influence your conduct? How will it comport with your appreciation of Divine excellence? How will it encourage you in your endeavour to become perfect "even as He is perfect"? How might it bring you, while praising God outwardly with your lips, inwardly to worship a monster of ferocity?

*T.* "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (v. 15.)

*P.* Who are prophets? By what test shall we be able to distinguish a false from a true prophet? and a sheep from a wolf in sheep's clothing? Are there any prophets now? and are any of them false? Do we still call them prophets? When men prophesy now-a-days, do we wait till their prophecies are fulfilled to pronounce whether they are true or false? What do we mean by evidence? by proof? by testimony? by witnesses? and how do we use them in order to judge of the intelligence, or truthfulness, or sanity, or sobriety of prophets?

*T.* "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

"Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." (v. 16 to 20.)

*P.* What are the fruits here referred to? What afford the same means of judging men that fruits do of judging trees? Why do men's past and present acts give a better clue to their future acts than words? Why are trees hewn down? and in what sense may men be said to be hewn down?

*T.* "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (v. 21.)

*P.* What is God's will? How is God's will to be distinguished from man's will, falsely passed off as His will? Who are they that represent His will as favouring and abetting conduct destructive of human happiness? or as disapproving and obstructing efforts to promote that happiness? Is it difficult, at times, to become acquainted with His will? Have people

often been obliged to confess their ignorance and repent and recant their errors? Does experience of men's ignorance and presumption in interpreting God's will warrant rebuke for the past and caution for the future, in regard to the practice of taking His name in vain by saying, Lord, Lord?

T. "Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." (v. 22, 23.)

P. What day is referred to under the designation of "that day"? When men prophesy, how are we to judge whether they prophesy in the Lord's name? What is meant by casting out devils? Can men cast out devils in these days? and how? Which are the works of men that deserve to be called "wonderful works"? To what other men besides prophets may it be expected that Christ will say, "I know you not; depart from me ye that work iniquity"?

T. "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it." (v. 24 to 27.)

P. You have read the sayings here referred to. How must you prepare to "do them"? How must they be interpreted? Which are to be accepted literally, and as applicable to all generations? Which to be kept in accord with other sayings, by being construed as pointed against or addressed to particular individuals, classes, and people, ironically, exhortatively, denun-

ciatively, figuratively, or in commiseration of the superstitions and prejudices of the ignorant and ferocious race among whom Christ preached?

T. We think you have done your part to place us in possession of your opinions, and of the reasons on which they are based. It remains with us to judge for ourselves to what extent we ought to adopt them in practice. There is so much that is new to us—so much demanding long and careful consideration,—that we will not even attempt to anticipate the conclusions which we may form in the end. Meanwhile it is but justice to you to acknowledge, that we are strengthened in our determination to follow up in our schools the course of instruction to which you have introduced us. We cannot err in doing that.



ON THE BIBLE IN RELATION TO ADULTS.

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*T.* You will smile, no doubt, at the first-fruits of our cogitations upon your views of the inexpediency of forcing the Bible into children's schools, and of there desecrating it into a book out of which to extract reading-lessons. Your reasons, and the illustrations with which you supported them, seem to us to go far beyond your purpose. If we are not mistaken, they might be urged in justification of denying the Bible not only to children, but to the majority of adults.

*P.* Do you mean that most adults are incapable of understanding the Bible?

*T.* We have but lately had our attention directed to the kind of questions which you have shown ought to form a part of scripture-lessons. We fear that we should hardly be able to satisfy you or ourselves by the answers that we might make to some of them. Would you not, on that account, shut us out, and a host of people still more incompetent than we are, from the perusal and study of the Bible?

*P.* I should be sorry to exclude you or anybody else, who I thought could profit thereby, from the study of the scriptures.

*T.* However great your sorrow might be, we do not see that you could consistently sanction the putting of the Bible into the hands of adults unprepared to appreciate it, any more than into those of children.

*P.* Are you not mistaking the grounds on which I object to making a reading-book of the Bible? I contend not that children do not understand, but that they cannot be brought

to understand, what they read in the Bible. Only persuade me that the children who leave your schools really appreciate the lessons which they have read in the Bible, and their inability to understand them on their entrance would be no reason with me for keeping them from the Bible. My test for ascertaining whether they understand, and are capable of applying, what they read, would be some such questions as I have suggested. And the mere proposal of these questions seems to convince you that children could not answer them, and makes you suspect that you would find it no easy matter to answer many of them yourselves.

*T.* It appears to us that there are thousands of adults who are far less likely to derive benefit from the perusal of the Bible than the larger number of our school-children, and yet you would grant the Bible to the former, and deny it to the latter.

*P.* You are furnishing an example of the facility with which a simple question may be complicated, by the use of terms that covertly introduce elements really not involved in it. Because, for the good of the children themselves, I would postpone Bible-lessons from the age when they could only suffer, till the age when they might profit, from them, you say that I would deny them the Bible; as if I would deny them a good, not guard them against an evil—withhold from them a benefit, not shelter them from injury. Knowing that the Bible is meant to do them good, I reserve it till they are prepared to relish and digest the good that is placed before them.

*T.* We retract the expression as regards the children. But, perhaps, you will allow us to ask, why you would not also defer putting the Bible into the hands of adults till they are able to cull instruction and good guidance from its pages?

*P.* I admit that there are many persons whom one would be as sorry to find reading the Bible, as to see a false witness per-juring himself with it in his hand; but if one could distinguish between those adults who are and those who are not competent to interpret it correctly, one would not take upon oneself to

pronounce who might not become competent—who might not learn to interpret correctly, or improve by the attempt.

*T.* It might be thought that the Bible is not, in your opinion, that unquestionable good to mankind which we have always considered it to be—that it is, at best, a mixture of good and evil, improper for all children, and for most adults as we see them.

*P.* You seem determined to represent me as disparaging the Bible. In the same way you might represent me as disparaging a galvanic battery, a steam-engine, or even an axe, because I should shudder at seeing them committed to children, or to drunken, unskilful, and reckless adults.

*T.* The Bible is so immeasurably above all these creations of man, that your comparison rather shocks than reconciles us.

*P.* This I regret. I am in the habit of considering all things to be equally gifts from God, one thing as much as another, the least as the greatest, a part as the whole. But upon your own showing, the Bible ought to be treated with special reverence, above all other gifts bestowed upon man. How is this reverence to be shown?—by greater or by less attention in its use, than in the use of other gifts?

*T.* By greater, of course—by the greatest possible attention.

*P.* Is not this precisely what I am insisting upon? Why do I remonstrate against the practice of putting the Bible into the hands of children?

*T.* Because they are, in your opinion, incapable of reading it with that intelligence, and consequently with that devout reverence, which is due to it.

*P.* You scarcely do me justice. I do not urge the withholding the Bible from children simply because they are incapable of understanding it, but because they cannot be rendered capable of understanding it before they have outgrown the age of childhood, and because they may best be prepared to understand and appreciate it as adults by being kept from it while children. My objection to seeing the Bible in the school-room would vanish could I see it treated with

decency and respect, or could I foresee the probability of its ever being so treated.

*T.* Did we not understand you to say that you would not withhold the Bible from adults, although you must know, or at least strongly suspect, that the larger portion of them have not the capacity of deriving benefit and steering clear of misdirection from it—a capacity to be sought in the individuals perusing, not in the volume perused?

*P.* You understood me exactly. Sad as it makes me to see the Bible in the hands of adults incapable, from lack of intelligence, of perusing it with profit and reverence, it makes me still sadder to see them wanting this intelligence. My thoughts are directed, accordingly, to the means, not of keeping the Bible from them, but of providing them with the intelligence which they are in need of.

*T.* We think we have now got hold of the distinction which you make between adults and children, both unfit to read the sacred volume. The first you say may be made fit, not the second. You would not, therefore, keep the Bible from adults; while your duty towards children and your respect for the Bible would lead you to keep them asunder.

*P.* We have not yet marked out the whole of our duty to adults in connexion with the Bible. Would you share in my regret at seeing its pages turned over by readers who took to its perusal right feelings unawakened and intelligence undeveloped?

*T.* We should.

*P.* And what answer do you think your “Christian friends” would give to this question?

*T.* The same as ourselves. But you must allow us to observe, that the very tone of your question implies an utter want of confidence in them, and a harshness which is not exactly in keeping with your general character.

*P.* I am sorry to think that I should have made such an impression upon you, who are so favourably disposed towards me. Upon others it would probably be stronger; and my

influence and my usefulness must thereby be impaired. You know how gladly I would welcome any of them as fellow-labourers in our work, could I but prevail upon them to desist from sowing tares and thistles among the corn, and to adopt the methods of cultivation which have been proved to be most effective in raising large and good crops. To please you, I will assume that we all so far think alike—that the Bible is not to be withheld from adults, but that they ought to be capable of reading it with intelligence and right feeling. What course ought to be pursued in such circumstances by the recognized leaders and teachers of mankind, and by the host of volunteers who press forward to share their labours?

*T.* We dare not attempt to answer this question without your assistance.

*P.* What may we accept as the state of society in which modern teachers, professional and voluntary, are placed in regard to the Bible? May we say that there are many adults incapable of even reading it, in the vulgar sense of that term; and many more who bring to its perusal neither the intelligence nor the right feeling, without which benefit is scarcely to be expected, mischief is greatly to be feared?

*T.* We think, after what you have placed before us, our answer must be "We may." Even should our estimate of the present unfavourable condition of society be somewhat exaggerated, no bad consequences will follow, if our exertions for improving it be quickened thereby.

*P.* And what direction ought your efforts to take?

*T.* You would say, to impart and diffuse the intelligence and right feeling which are wanting.

*P.* And would you not?

*T.* You give us no quarter. You know we could not refuse to say that. But we were thinking of what others would say—what we ourselves should have said before we met with you, that it is vain to look for this intelligence and this right feeling elsewhere than in the Bible.

*P.* And you would have evaded, not solved the difficulty,

which is—How those to whom we present the Bible are to be prepared to find the intelligence and good feeling which they are to look for in the Bible. I must ask again, are we agreed that all children and too many adults are not so prepared?

*T.* We are.

*P.* Let us not, then, lose sight of that portion of our inquiry on which we were engaged—the duties towards others, of leaders and teachers. To do their work effectually, must they be in possession of the intelligence and right feeling spoken of?

*T.* They must.

*P.* And they have to teach those who have not their intelligence and right feeling, or whose intelligence and feelings have gone astray. In regard to the young, whose intelligence and feelings are undeveloped, I will not add to what I have already said concerning the impropriety and wickedness of forcing them, without previous preparation, upon the perusal of the Bible. In regard to adults whose intelligence and feelings are misdirected, the history of the last thousand years, and the practice of our own times, too clearly parade before us the atrocities, the meannesses, the hypocrisies, the inconsistencies, and the hollow pretences that can be justified out of its pages. With this proof of the unripeness of the young and the ill-growth of adults, each unfitting for the perusal of the Bible with benefit, or even without hurt, ought teachers to relinquish their work or to become lukewarm because warned off from such desecration of the Bible?

*T.* Not if the work be possible to them without the Bible.

*P.* If the work be possible! Can any teacher do his work—can he be anything but a monstrous sham, if he be not thoroughly imbued with the instruction which he has to communicate, and in the case of moral and religious subjects, with the spirit of the temper and conduct that he has to recommend to his pupils?

*T.* Certainly he cannot.

*P.* I am addressing myself to teachers competent in their

vocation. Do you teach geography in your schools, with or without a book?

*T.* Without a book.

*P.* And elementary chemistry?

*T.* Without a book.

*P.* And arithmetic, mensuration, algebra, and physiology?

*T.* Also without books; availing ourselves of objects, models, maps and diagrams to illustrate our teaching, and attach meaning to our words.

*P.* Is this because you have no books, or because you teach better without them?

*T.* Because we teach better without them. We are glad to consult books to keep up and to extend our own knowledge, and we would not deny the use of books to our pupils progressively as the desire to read them grows out of the knowledge that they have already acquired.

*P.* Does religion, think you, stand apart from all other subjects, in being better taught with a book than without it?

*T.* Unless we declare ourselves unconvinced by your proofs of the incapacity of persons to do justice to the Bible till they have undergone judicious teaching and training, we are bound to admit that of all subjects religion is best taught without a book—is best taught by those who, having thoroughly imbibed its spirit, are able to pour it forth in tones of earnestness, affection, and encouragement, calculated to awaken the interest and satisfy the intelligence of their pupils, and to inspire efforts at self-improvement.

*P.* And what is the course pursued by those who are loudest in insisting upon Bible-lessons in schools as the basis of all religion, and upon the religion which these lessons will leave behind them as the basis of all education?

*T.* They seem wholly intent upon what they call spreading the Gospel; neglecting the cultivation of that intelligence, and of those religious feelings which would cause the Bible to be sought for, and when found, to be read to advantage.

*P.* Among the many schemes that have been proposed for

raising the poorer classes out of their pitiable and semi-destitute condition, do you remember the remarkable effort that was made, some years ago, to persuade artisans and others to associate together to obtain possession of land, the cultivation of which by themselves, it was alleged, would be the certain cure of all their woes?

*T.* We remember it well.

*P.* And what was the result of this attempt?

*T.* It was a sad failure; and the poor creatures who were persuaded to abandon the trades to which they had been brought up, suffered not only disappointment of their hopes and the loss of their savings, but the most cruel privation.

*P.* Did the probable causes of the failure of these poor people ever engage your attention?

*T.* They did indeed; for friends of our own were among the sufferers. These poor people, misled by others in whom they confided, undertook a work for which they were quite unprepared. They not only were without the knowledge and skill indispensable for success, but they were actually unconscious of what knowledge and skill were required, or how to get them if time could have been had for the purpose.

*P.* Is there not some foundation, nevertheless, for the suggestion of resorting to the land? Does not the larger part of our sustenance come from the land? Could we subsist without land?

*T.* We could not; nor without water either, and yet we would not recommend people to fling themselves into it.

*P.* They can obtain the use of as much water as they need without drowning themselves. Can you say as much in regard to the land?

*T.* Quite as much. When the artisans in our towns have had the blessing of Christian treatment from their childhood—and how many are without that blessing!—while Scripture phrases are trumpeted in their ears, they will find no difficulty in procuring bread from the land, gas from the coal-bed, and water from the reservoir, without cultivating a farm, burrowing in a mine, or pumping from a river.



*P.* And how will they procure these things?

*T.* By engaging indirectly in all the work required for procuring these and many other things. By concentrating their attention principally on the limited number of operations included in some one branch of business, and exercising their intelligence in obtaining, through the produce of their special work, a share of the produce of other men's works.

*P.* When artisans fail in obtaining an adequate share of the produce of other men's work to supply their want of bread in particular, what would be the effect of enticing them on the land?

*T.* To make their share still less—still more inadequate—probably to throw them upon the poor-rates. Farming, as now conducted, requires a large amount of special attainments. The resources of most of the sciences in their present state of advancement must be within reach of the farmer, and he must know how to use them. He must have served his apprenticeship to the business. The land is made to produce four-fold what it did a few centuries ago. And to undertake the cultivation of a farm unprepared by such an apprenticeship, or qualified by some other means, would be little short of madness.

*P.* Who, among all men, obtain the largest share of the products of the land for their enjoyment?

*T.* Not the farmers or cultivators of the land in particular, but they who, in every trade, profession, or division of labour, best know their duties and best perform them.

*P.* And who are they that suffer most from want of an adequate share of the products of the land?

*T.* Not artisans, and others who have no hold upon land; but the ignorant, the idle, the drunken, the wasteful, the dishonest, and the unruly.

*P.* Sad as you might be at witnessing the suffering endured by these poor people, you would not urge them to fly for comfort to the land. Whither, then, would you advise them to turn for relief?

*T.* When they are not unreclaimable, we would lend our efforts to raise them out of the ignorance and bad habits which have caused their sufferings. We would not be guilty of the cruel mockery of alluring them to the land. Above all, we would endeavour to prevent the young from following in their steps.

*P.* What would you think of sending them to the Bible, instead of the land?

*T.* We suspect it would be almost as great a mockery.

*P.* Is not the Bible, like the land, capable of being made to yield to modern cultivation a much larger harvest of religion and good conduct than that which our less enlightened ancestors could possibly extract from it?

*T.* It is.

*P.* And is it creditable to our divines that a book replete with wisdom, but demanding adult capacity, and that, too, well instructed and trained, should be irreverently thrust upon children, and upon adults in whose behalf no pains had been taken to qualify them to extract "the bread of life," to prevent their drawing justifications for unholy conduct from its pages?

*T.* These reflections will sound strange and startling—will not, we fear, prove acceptable to the larger part of what is considered the religious world. One good consequence, however, may follow from the promulgation of them. The religious world may be led to examine and acknowledge the inefficiency of the secular, that is of the teaching, appliances with which they are accompanying and enforcing their Bible-lessons. The mere fact of our having listened to your expositions will, we know, disgrace us in the eyes of some of them. They will charge us with having abandoned our religion.

*P.* You must live down this imputation by the faithful discharge of your duty. The more intelligent of those who at first dissent from your practice, will learn to recognize that you teach religion all the better for excluding the Bible from the school-room. As for the unteachable among your Christian

friends, you must bear with them; and when in the course of time they are removed to a better world, the occupation of their posts by less prejudiced men must reconcile you to the dispensation of death.

*T.* Whatever our own views may be, we fully expect that reading-lessons from the Bible will continue to be insisted upon in our schools; and we must do our best to prevent the mischief that you apprehend from them, by the vigilant and effective discharge of our other school duties.

*P.* There is another matter of vast importance to you and all the members of your profession, upon which we ought not to omit to compare notes. I hold, and I am not singular in doing so, that there is no art so much in arrear of the science or advanced knowledge of the age, as that of education. If I, and they who agree with me, be right, it is evident that you must expect many suggestions for the improvement of your schools to be made to you, and many applications to be urged upon you, directly and indirectly, both to adopt and to resist them. In what spirit ought these suggestions and applications to be received?

*T.* We ought to welcome them thankfully—at all events, do nothing that should be likely to discourage or exclude them; examine them carefully and candidly, and then adopt or reject them wholly or partially, according as they appear adapted to promote the object towards which all our efforts ought to be directed.

*P.* Ought you not to make some distinction between the parties towards whom you have contracted obligations? Have you not two lines of duty, one towards yourselves and society, by which I mean the adult portion, and the other towards children, and particularly the children under your own special charge? What is your reason for saying that you would do nothing that might shut you out from receiving suggestions?

*T.* Because we are convinced that teachers greatly in advance of ourselves must be far from perfection; and that it would ill become us, who have so much to learn in order to educate the

young properly, to be debarred by our own act from the improvement so needful for us.

*P.* But do you not think that most of the suggestions offered to you would be either old familiar truths in new garbs, or, if new, the very reverse of improvements?

*T.* For this we must be prepared, and our task will be to pick out the grains of worth from the bushels of chaff and rubbish with which they may be mixed.

*P.* Why do you say that you would welcome all, when you would be expecting to retain and use so little?

*T.* Because it is a condition attached to our obtaining knowledge and improvement, that free scope and encouragement should be offered to all who attempt to supply them; knowing as we do from past experience, that the failures will ever be numerous in proportion to the successes, and that we shall have much to reject in our endeavours to find something to retain.

*P.* Is it necessary, then, to receive truth and falsehood and rubbish alike, in order to get at the former?

*T.* We receive many visitors courteously, and yet invite few among them to renew their visits, and retain still fewer as friends. As regards doctrines and opinions, statements of fact and inferences from them, we think "error" a better expression than "falsehood," which implies intentional misrepresentation. You must not, even with that correction, think us fastidious, if instead of "receiving alike," we ask to be allowed to say that we would not be excluded from new suggestions, because they will comprise errors and rubbish with here and there only a truth interspersed, since on these conditions alone will truths come to us.

*P.* Will you not expect to have falsehoods or wilful perversions of the truth passed upon you as well as errors, from among which truths are to be extracted?

*T.* These may occur. But intentional misrepresentations in matters of doctrine are much less frequent than the unintentional. They must be subjected to the same tests which enable

us to separate truth from error. The perverter of facts, the reckless asserter, the liar, the forger in science and speculation, must be exposed, so that he may be disarmed and rendered powerless. True and false in conduct are equivalent to good and bad, and demand very different treatment from true and erroneous in speculation.

*P.* Will your desire for knowledge, for truth and improvement, incline you to grant admission in the first instance to the false and erroneous on an equal footing with the true?

*T.* Our inclinations will be better described by stating, that we admit new suggestions in the only shape that they are ever offered to us, for the purpose of extracting the truth out of them. We would exclude no new suggestion, for fear of excluding a truth. We would, after admitting a new suggestion, refuse to adopt it without careful examination, for fear of adopting something false or erroneous.

*P.* You adopt it as part of the duty which you owe to yourselves and to adult society to throw no impediment in the way of the free circulation of suggestions, ideas, and opinions—give them what name we will—lest by so doing you should check the continued flow of those truths and improvements from which we have all along derived such great advantages. You are resigned to accept, as a condition, the errors and rubbish that always accompany new supplies, and to hold yourselves bound to become qualified for the work of filtering, washing, winnowing, or refining, according as any of these processes may be called for. Having accepted this duty as regards yourselves, what course will you pursue towards your children?

*T.* We must do our best to give them the benefit of our knowledge and experience.

*P.* This of course. But we must enter into a few particulars—we must aim at something more practical and precise. The children are placed under your care for some definite purpose, understood by you, if not by their parents who deliver them over to you. What is that purpose?

*T.* To make of them well-conducted men.

P. What are your methods for accomplishing this purpose?

T. Teaching and training.

P. Will the training or discipline attempted by you be based upon what you or they understand to be good conduct?

T. Upon what we understand, of course; and also, progressively as we ascend in our teaching, upon what they understand.

P. Will your teaching be specially directed to conduct, so that a knowledge of the distinctions between good and bad, right and wrong, may accompany or follow closely upon the discipline which aims at forming habits and dispositions that incline to practice the good and eschew the bad, and at turning the feelings of sympathy, affection, and respect upon companions and others who act in the same manner?

T. It will be directed to enable our children to distinguish between good and bad conduct, and to make them sensible of so much of their own nature as will lead them to perceive in how great a degree they are masters of their own future dispositions and conduct.

P. Is it possible that, in your teachings, differences might arise between you and them as to what really is good conduct?

T. There would be several stages in their progress to the knowledge of conduct. At first, they would have no distinct notions of good and bad, as applicable to conduct; and till light and order were little by little let in upon them, they might judge erroneously and confusedly.

P. And how would you introduce more light and order, to enable them to judge correctly and to agree with you?

T. By accustoming them to consider acts and conduct with reference to their consequences—not to judge before forming some estimate of these consequences, and to pronounce acts and conduct to be good or bad according as their consequences are likely to be favourable or unfavourable to the general well-being. In lessons immediately bearing upon investigations into good and bad conduct, if our pupils suspected that we started with conclusions ready formed, or with leanings towards

conclusions opposed to their own, we would make a point of demanding, on both sides, a suspension of judgment till the investigation into probable consequences had been completed.

*P.* In the wish to make all your lessons converge towards imparting a capacity to distinguish between good and bad conduct, would you make any selection of subjects to be taught and of methods of teaching?

*T.* We must do that, whether we would or not. The number of subjects which it is useful to know, and which ought to be known to *some*, is so great, that a selection, and a selection too of the comparatively small number which must be taught to *all*, is inevitable. The power of sustained attention, besides, especially in children, is limited, and an attempt to tax it beyond those limits is fraught with danger.

*P.* Is it a duty, then, which teachers owe to their children, to be most careful in the selection which they make of subjects to be taught and of methods of teaching, so that their limited powers may neither be overstrained, nor so misdirected or wasted, that time and power will be wanting for the instruction and mental discipline indispensable for their future guidance?

*T.* We are so convinced of this duty that we are determined, whatever else must give way, to make room in our schools for the kind of instruction which you have been labouring so strenuously to qualify us to impart. Adult capacity to extract benefit from the Scriptures must be aimed at and sought for through such instruction as you are insisting upon in the schools.

*P.* Would the knowledge that children under your charge are destined to be withdrawn from you, and to be thrown at an early age upon self-guidance in the industrial world, cause you to modify your opinion?

*T.* Only so far as to make us the more resolute that nothing should be omitted which might contribute to soften the hardship of their future lot.

*P.* That would be both more religious and more sensible than whining over their lot, or seeking to accomplish what is impossible—to detain them by compulsion. But does it not

appear to you that there may be room for improvement in our schools, in the selection of subjects taught, as well as of the methods of teaching them?

*T.* We must confess that, after the reading, writing, and arithmetic, the subjects appointed to be taught in our schools are not in the order of their importance.

*P.* Are you not countenancing a prejudice in giving this preference to reading, writing, and computing?

*T.* Surely these ought to be included among the essentials of education.

*P.* Granted. But may they not be well or ill taught, pleasantly or painfully, quickly or slowly, thoroughly or indifferently, according as they are presented to the young learners?

*T.* It did not occur to us that you would have these essentials postponed to other subjects.

*P.* Nor do I know that I would. I might be guided by the age and aptitude of the children. Would you have these essentials taught to the youngest children in an infant school?

*T.* Of course not: but we were not thinking of infant schools.

*P.* I am glad that we have stumbled upon them; for they deserve to be thought about. Through them we may be helped in our efforts to decide wisely upon the course of instruction best adapted for other schools. What would you have taught in infant schools?

*T.* We would simply have the infants—the youngest among them, at all events, amused.

*P.* I like that thought. But, for children to be amused, they must be moving and doing. A qualified mistress will promote their amusement by showing them how to move and what to do, and by directing them how to observe, to inquire, and to infer. Would you object, when the children are old enough to be received in your schools, to their having overcome the first difficulties in reading, writing, and computing?

*T.* We should be most thankful to find that they had already overcome those difficulties.



*P.* Nevertheless, neither you nor I would have the foundations of these acquirements laid in the infant school at the expense of the health, cheerfulness, and activity which ought to preside there. The desire to acquire these powers is generated, so to speak, of itself in children, who have first had their faculties exercised in handling, contriving, observing, remembering, noting, and reflecting. If the desire to learn these essentials, and to make some progress in acquiring them, be drawn forth in the infant school through observing, experimenting, and thinking, how is it most likely to be further developed in your own schools?

*T.* We see, by continuing to exercise the children on subjects which will give them a desire to read, to write, and to compute, and to fix their attention upon the lessons specially given to perfect them in those arts.

*P.* Talking of essentials, have you ever thought of the classes of subjects which are best adapted to call forth and exercise the reflecting powers in children? We have seen how thinking may lead to the desire of learning to read; but if the cultivation of the habit of thinking be disregarded, will reading lead to it?

*T.* We know full well that it will not.

*P.* I repeat my question, which ought to interest you. How may we hope best to call forth the thinking faculties of children?

*T.* By teaching in your style.

*P.* Of course, I consider my style adapted to that end, or I would not have selected it. But, to be more precise,—is it not by inviting research into cause and effect, and by promoting practice and proficiency in tracing, among all antecedents and consequents, those which stand in the relation of cause and effect to one another?

*T.* You are giving us much to think over. Were we unreservedly to adopt your views of what constitutes good teaching, we fear we should have to condemn much that is going on in our schools, as sad waste of the time and misapplication of the limited powers of children.

*P.* If, instead of cause and effect in general, we fix our attention upon those causes and effects which are exemplified in human conduct, there can scarcely be a difference of opinion as to the importance of a habit of paying some regard to them. The rules of conduct in the family and school all bear testimony to the fact, that cause and effect, however imperfectly studied, are not despised as of no account. Does it not behove us to inquire what portion of ordinary school-instruction is directed to evoke seriousness of thought and solidity of judgment upon all matters pertaining to human conduct?

*T.* The reading-books, books of history in particular, and the Bible, furnish the lessons which, it is taken for granted, exercise the children's faculties upon the appreciation of conduct; and call up in them, concurrently with discipline, imitation and example, the desire to practise that conduct which they conceive to be good, commendable, and religious.

*P.* It is this habit of depending upon the influence of reading-books in schools which appears to me so liable to thwart the best intentions, as regards the forming the characters of men. Reading-books have to be considered in two lights: as means for acquiring practice and skill in the art of reading, and as means for acquiring capacity of discriminating and judging on the bearing of conduct. There is no question between us as to the use of books for the former purpose, combined with which may be exercises of the memory and the acquisition of a large store of facts and descriptions, historical, topographical, and geographical, and of a relish for works that appeal to the taste, the feelings, and the imagination. I have given you my views, and the reasons for them, with elucidations, of the unfitness of the young, arising out of their immaturity, to grapple with the difficulties of the Bible, and to do justice to the moral lessons deducible from its pages; the aid of years and of much preliminary study being indispensable. You can tell me whether the books of history, which you say are read in your schools, are made the texts for such exercises of the powers of discriminating between good and bad conduct in the

people of different ages and countries, and in their rulers, as I have endeavoured to show the Bible ought to be made, unless it is to be used as a toy or a torture.

*T.* We must admit that, to our knowledge, reading-books are only used as books for giving practice in reading, in combination occasionally with exercises of the memory, by repetition of the words read, or of the events narrated, or of the judgments and dogmas pronounced. But attempts to obtain answers that it would be useful to have to the why, what, when, where, and how, which you deal in so profusely, are not thought of. Indeed, we might say, that the reading-books, as a rule, are written in a style indicating that the answers to such questions were never in the writers' minds; and if asked for, would frequently be either not forthcoming or unacceptable.

*P.* It is but due to yourselves and to me that we should look back at the difficulty which you raised, and which you seemed to think might shake the ground whereon I based my justification for withdrawing the Bible from the school-room. It appeared to you that the reasons adduced for recommending such a course would necessitate the withholding of the Bible from large classes of adults. And I presume you would decidedly object to any attempt of the kind?

*T.* Assuredly we should.

*P.* We all of us know too well that there are many adults among us who cannot even read, and many more who understand very imperfectly what they do read. Object as we may to the withholding of the Bible from them, are they not practically withheld from the Bible?

*T.* They certainly are.

*P.* If to these two classes we add another, of those who do not suffer so much from want of understanding as from perversion or misdirection of understanding, what must we say of them? Do they not draw, or fancy that they draw, from the Bible a sanction for the commission of bad acts, and for, what is nearly as bad, leaving undone things indispensable for social well-being?

*T.* The pages of a book intended for man's enlightenment, guidance, and purification, are thus made, in appearance at least, to furnish a justification for ignorance and misconduct.

*P.* As you are not indisposed to seek for the causes of social phenomena, and are attaining to some expertness in the detection of them, can you point to any of the causes which have led to so painful a result as that many of our fellow-creatures should be as effectually shut out from the reading of the Scriptures, as the blind are from contemplating the beauties of nature, that many more should be incapable of comprehending them, and that others should actually turn them into instruments of mischief?

*T.* There is no denying that the principal cause of their forlorn and misguided condition must be, the absence of that instruction which would have enabled them to read, mark learn, and inwardly digest the Holy Scriptures.

*P.* May we say that their state of wretchedness, of spiritual destitution, is attributable to the unchristian treatment which they met with in their childhood?

*T.* We should not object to that form of expression, allowance being made for the ignorance which has hitherto blinded Christians to the importance of duties to the young, now fully recognized.

*P.* You see reasons for excusing past conduct. It appears to you that the past ill-treatment of children, afflicting as are the consequences, may have originated in ignorance rather than in a callous disregard of duty. Be it so. But what will you say of our generation, if the children under our care should grow up into men incapable of reading the Scriptures, or of understanding what they read; or, what is worse, capable of making out of them a screen for neglect and mistake of duty?

*T.* We shall offer no excuse, attempt no extenuation for our generation. The day is past when child-neglect might be the mistake of a community of uninformed Christians. Henceforward, it must be the sin of a community, if of Christians at all, of professing, pretending Christians.

*P.* It has been my misfortune to displease many well-meaning persons and to encounter their opposition, because of my aversion to countenance what I consider a desecration of the Bible, and a trifling, or worse, with children by forcing them prematurely upon its study. But there need be no controversy between us as to what is desirable for adults. We are all of one mind that adults should be disposed and able to read and study and appreciate the Bible. Is it beyond the reach of human effort and contrivance that every adult shall have been so far educated as to be able to read his Bible, and so to interpret it as to deduce from it rules of life and principles of conduct, alike conducive to human well-being and creditable to men who are enjoined to aim at becoming perfect, "even as He is perfect" ?

*T.* Reflecting upon the magnitude and difficulty of the works which have been undertaken by men, and brought to a successful issue, one cannot conceive how it is to be maintained that the education of all children, so as to make them competent to read and appreciate the Scriptures as men, should be out of the reach of human effort.

*P.* Education, we are agreed, is better understood, and more generally attempted, than it was in former days ; but can we comfort ourselves with the assurance, or even with the hope, that the education of the young, as now conducted, will result in a generation of adults capable of reading the Scriptures as they ought to be read ?

*T.* We fear not.

*P.* You fear not : and yet, as far as you can judge, there is no difficulty in its way unsurmountable by human effort. How can this be ?

*T.* We fear that the men who have the means are not disposed to make the effort.

*P.* Are you aware that you are making a most serious charge against those men who have the means ? Do they not profess to be Christians ? And are you not implying that they either deny Christ, or, worse, acknowledge Him with their lips,

and disregard Him in their conduct? Before you can with propriety charge them with so heinous an offence, ought you not to be quite certain that they are not rather wanting in the means than in the will?

*T.* We ought. Moreover we ought to wish, for their sakes, that we could attribute the fearful prevalence of child-neglect to the want of means rather than to want of will to put a stop to it. But how can we doubt the superabundance of means among large numbers of the community? We see them possessed of more houses and larger houses than they can occupy. Equipages and servants are maintained, not only to wait upon them, but for display. Their tables are supplied profusely and luxuriously. The world is ransacked to gratify their whims and caprices; and no expenditure is grudged which is likely to assist idleness, through a perpetual shifting of scenery and position, to banish ennui without undergoing fatigue or privation. Annoyances are removed, and the slightest dilapidations are repaired, so that not even an eyesore shall disturb their comfort and composure. How, then, can we fancy that deserted or ill-cared-for children are an eyesore to them?

*P.* Can a man to whom an ill-cared-for child, to use your own expression, is not an eyesore, be a Christian? Can a rich man, who shows by his mode of living that he has no thought of denying himself any indulgence, or of enduring unremoved any the slightest annoyance that crosses his path, be a Christian,—if he do not take at least as much pains to see his dwelling surrounded with well-cared-for children as to see his park-palings in repair, his domains well stocked, his rooms well furnished, and his table well provided, and himself free to roam from town to country, and from one country to another, as intent on consuming honey as the bees of society are on collecting it?

*T.* It is almost terrible to dwell upon the contrast which you have drawn between the Christian in words and the Christian in deeds; between the Christian who would make the Bible a

school-book, and the Christian who would care that all children shall grow into men qualified to read and appreciate the Bible.

*P.* Let us be just. Let us be careful to recognize those elements of good, which, if not so abundant as we would have them, are nevertheless to be met with scattered about in all directions. We should be contributing little, if at all, to the elevation of our race, and be doing but a sorry service to any society, were we to ignore, or even to expose ourselves to the imputation of ignoring, the uneasiness of feeling created by its aberrations and misdeeds in many of its members. Granting that the contrast between Christian conduct and Christian doctrine is frightful to contemplate, does it appear to you, so far as you have been able to form an opinion, to have remained unaltered throughout the Christian era, or to be more or less striking than it used to be?

*T.* We certainly may comfort ourselves with the assurance that disregard of Christian doctrine in conduct is less flagrant than it was formerly.

*P.* And is there reason to think that the wide gulf which separates Christian conduct from Christian doctrine has been contracting with greater or with less rapidity as we have approached modern times?

*T.* With greater; and the process of contraction, mournfully slow though it be, is now more rapid than ever.

*P.* It is some consolation to feel, while still wanderers from the path of duty, that our efforts are gradually bringing us nearer and nearer to it. If you are not mistaken, we may mitigate the severity of our self-reproaches. Peradventure, the occasion for them may shortly disappear! If I were to suggest even so miserably low a standard of comparison as "Capacity to read the Bible," whereby to measure the relative merits of all the generations of Christians, to which would you give the palm?

*T.* To our own: since the proportion of adults in our generation who cannot read is smaller than it ever has been; and,

from what is now going on in our schools, there is reason to expect that this proportion will steadily decline.

P. And if I were to suggest a higher standard, "Capacity to interpret Scripture in harmony with Divine wisdom and goodness," omitting conduct, the highest of all standards?

T. Measured by that standard, we would claim a yet more decided superiority for this generation, since the human race was never before informed so widely or so correctly concerning right and wrong, and the tests whereby to distinguish between the characteristics of good and evil. And we feel with you that the capacity to read, without the capacity to form correct judgments on human conduct, is a slender preparation for appreciating and reverencing, as they deserve, the records of Divine wisdom and goodness preserved to us in the Holy Bible, or the manifestations of them in the daily fulfilment of His laws in creation.

P. I think we are agreed that, as a nation, we are far from being free from the reproach of having permitted to grow up among us a host of human beings unable to read the Bible, and a yet larger host unable to appreciate the full significance of the words which they read. By what test may we best estimate the intelligence and sincerity of those who profess a desire to see the Holy Bible become to every man "the ark of safety in manhood and of refuge in old age"?

T. By their zeal, do what else they may, in caring, not only that every child shall be taught to read the words in books, but shall be so well educated as "to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the solemn truths for which the words of Holy Writ, in obedience to the laws which limit the power of all words, are but the signs and symbols.

P. I must now be preparing to take my leave. To the best of my ability, I have endeavoured to put you in possession of my thoughts upon education. My practice you have had frequent opportunities of observing. My thoughts are not for you to adopt, but to reflect upon. My practice is not for you to imitate, but to profit by; since it may exemplify what ought to



be avoided, as well as what ought to be followed. On one point alone I will venture to caution you: You are living in a world where many novelties, many changes, many improvements have yet to be expected, considered, and adopted. Don't shut yourselves out from them! Don't deter others by your demeanour from producing their suggestions with confidence, and in the full persuasion that they will meet with impartial and friendly criticism, even if they are destined to be ultimately rejected.

*T.* We must beg that you will extend your kindness a little further, and favour us with your assistance in solving some other difficulties which still harass us. Our thanks for what we already owe to you will, we are aware, be most acceptably offered to you through our zeal in imparting the benefit of it to the children in our schools.

# PHILO-SOCRATES.

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## AMONG THE TEACHERS.

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### ON TRUTHFULNESS.

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*T.* AFTER pondering over the various questions which we have had the advantage of discussing with you, we cannot say that we find ourselves in a satisfactory state. You have rather shaken some of our old opinions and convictions, than supplied us with better.

*P.* Do you mean that I have shaken any convictions which you still wish to hold by?

*T.* No: for we feel that we have only abandoned what we cannot but admit to be erroneous, false, hurtful, and sinful. But we would rather be assisted to convictions fit to be accepted or held by, than be driven to surrender such as we had.

*P.* I fear you made a mistake in applying to me. I am not in the habit of supplying convictions. The utmost that I venture to attempt is to assist those who apply to me to form convictions for themselves. You know my method of assisting

children. They, unless their understandings have been ill-used, have no errors to surrender. They have only to be gradually led to perceive the distinctions between true and false and between right and wrong, and to accept the former. But you, in common with most adults, find that you have strayed or been seduced out of the road leading to the destination that you were wishing to reach. And do you really think that the stranger whom you meet, or who warns you of the wrong turn that you had taken, ought to be thought or spoken of as one who shakes your convictions? Is he not doing the very thing that is required to set you right?

*T.* You must excuse us, but we cannot help feeling disturbed.

*P.* Would you not also feel disturbed if you were awakened out of your beds by an alarm of fire, or if suddenly warned of any other danger that you had not suspected? But would you not also feel grateful to the party who by his caution enabled you to escape destruction?

*T.* We will be plain with you. You are making us feel as if we should be led on to disbelieve in Christianity.

*P.* Strange apprehension! An earnest, a cautious, I might even say a suspicious, search for truth may lead to your turning your back upon what you believe to be the grandest of truths! May not this apprehension originate in your beginning to perceive that many absurd and untenable doctrines have been accepted, and many bad acts and practices countenanced by you under the mistaken notion that they were conformable to Christianity? Ought you not to rejoice at the prospect of obtaining a deliverance from such dangerous delusions, and thus being left with "Religion, pure and undefiled"?

*T.* You must bear with us. But our deliverance, as you term it, seems to proceed at such a rate that our friends tell us we shall soon have no belief left to be delivered of.

*P.* I should have thought that you would reserve for your own judgment, and not submit to the judgment of your friends, how far the severance of truth from falsehood, of religion from

superstition, was liable to banish the former from your thoughts, or to wean them from your affections.

*T.* Neither will we submit to their judgments. Nevertheless, we feel the severity of the ordeal to which we are subjected, while we return to seek the continuance of your assistance, through which we hope to be left with religious convictions beyond the reach of doubt or cavil.

*P.* You can only arrive at this state of certainty and security by submitting all your opinions and convictions to the severest examination—an examination which shall at least establish beyond a doubt their mutual coherence, and that they are free from an internecine propensity to contradict and destroy one another. Too many people wince at the thought of the havoc which may be made by such an examination among opinions long cherished as sacred.

*T.* We wish we could say with truth that we do not wince. But we are resolved to face what we feel it would be cowardly, foolish, and irreligious to shirk.

*P.* While I applaud your resolution, I sympathize with your anxieties. As that around which our affections have once clung cannot be abandoned without a pang, is it surprising that reluctance should be felt to enter upon an investigation that may lead to such a result? The merchant who fears that his estate, if wound up, might not suffice to pay all his creditors—or the parent who suspects that the son upon whom he had set his fondest hopes may be guilty of some criminal or disgraceful act, can he but shrink from an investigation which is to remove or to confirm his suspicions? I readily assume that your attachment to your religion is as strong as that of a merchant for his honour, and of a father for his child.

*T.* We trust that it is. Religion is the anchor by which we hold to all that we enjoy in this world and hope for in the next.

*P.* Your simile suggests a question: Are you aware of the precautions which are taken by careful ship-owners before they receive anchors and chains on board their ships?

*T.* A strain is put upon them much beyond any that they will have to withstand in actual service.

*P.* Ought you to do less with the religious opinions on which you have to rely for the security of all that you hold most dear, than a ship-owner does with his anchors and chains? He would grieve to see them snap at the trial, but he runs the risk in order that he may be relieved from all fear of their parting at sea.

*T.* We do not see very clearly how religious opinions are to be tested, as anchors and cables are, previous to starting on the voyage of life. A strain upon them at all analogous to that from the dangers and temptations amid which they will have to struggle neither can be, nor ought to be, attempted in the nursery and school-room.

*P.* We need not add to the difficulty of the very trying investigation which we have before us by mixing it up with another. The test applied to anchors and chains proves their soundness, not the care and ability with which they are to be used. The truth of a religion is one thing; the fulness with which it has been imbibed, so as to secure conduct in conformity with its behests, is another. It is with the first alone that we have to deal at present. You may as well bear in mind, however, that the perfection arrived at in the second, if the religion were false, might be an aggravation of all the dreadful evils to which a false religion can give rise. The burning of widows on the funeral piles of their deceased husbands, and the wholesale slaughter of heretics and infidels, are but fruits of a scrupulous obedience to the injunctions of false religion, or, which is almost worse, of a good religion badly interpreted.

*T.* It is a sad reflection, blessed as we are in this part of the world by being saved from false religions, that we should have cursed ourselves with false interpretations of the true one vouchsafed to us.

*P.* And so applied those false interpretations as to have raised a doubt whether any atrocities committed by the

heathens have not been more than equalled under the banners of the Cross. Our efforts to distinguish between true and false interpretations of true religion may be facilitated by a preliminary consideration of the evidences or signs which have led you to the choice of the religion in which you rejoice. Passing over the Pagan superstitions, the two best known compilations which have disputed the hold upon the minds of men with the Bible, are the Koran and the Vedas—each of which claims a larger number, if a less intelligent class, of votaries than the Bible. Did you ever read these two celebrated expositions of religious doctrine which have gathered round them such hosts of believers?

*T.* No; and in fact they have never come in our way.

*P.* Nevertheless, you have no hesitation in rejecting them, unread, as false?

*T.* How could we do otherwise, believing in the Bible?

*P.* Which would be doing greater justice to the Bible, think you, its acceptance after a careful examination of the Vedas and the Koran, or its acceptance regardless of that which in those works has gained and retained so firm a hold over millions of mankind?

*T.* Your question is plausible; but it leaves unnoticed another alternative which is presented to us. We are entitled to ask for a brief summary or abstract of the doctrines contained in those works, supposing we have had no opportunity of observing what they are as exemplified in the conduct and ceremonials of the people who profess to believe in them, before we undertake the labour of examining them minutely. And if we learn from the mouths, and observe by the conduct of all who are reputed to be well-informed, well-conducted, pious, and saintly—not infidels and scoffers—enough to convince us that the rules of life enjoined by their religion are a mass of frivolities, enormities, and contradictions, with just so much of good in them as will enable society to exist, surely we may economize our time and powers, so as to apply them to better purpose in some other direction.

*P.* And will not the believers in the Vedas and the Koran act in the same spirit with the Bible, smiling with complacency, if they do not look with scorn and disgust, at what they consider to be contradictions and enormities in the several parts of the creed which you proclaim, and the still greater contradictions between your precepts and your conduct?

*T.* They will; and there can be little doubt that the conduct of so-called Christians in countries inhabited by believers in the Vedas and Koran has assisted greatly to confirm them in all their superstitions.

*P.* And this same conduct, in combination with the prodigious varieties of conduct, many of them inconsistent one with the other, drawn from one and the same form of words, ought to stir us up to the determination to winnow from our religion all those absurdities, contradictions, and deformities which have been suffered to disfigure it and to inflict such dreadful evils upon mankind.

*T.* We would gladly learn how this process of winnowing is to be conducted. More than once in the history of the world an attempt at winnowing has produced, not a gentle breeze sufficient to blow off the chaff, but a hurricane which has threatened to sweep away wheat and chaff together.

*P.* Showing how far safer it is to prevent the growth of superstition than to separate it from religion after they have had time to entwine themselves with the affections into one strong cord wherewith to tie down intelligence and all aspirations for improvement.

*T.* Unfortunately, we are no longer children; and on that account we have less time to learn, while we may have much to unlearn. But we hope that you will not abandon us in order to return to your favourite pupils—the children.

*P.* Do not fear. To abandon you, would be to abandon the children. Besides, you have an advantage over most adults. You are familiar with children. You can enter into my feelings when I recommend learners to make themselves “like unto little children” in all things save their weakness in power

of application and vigour of intellect. Let us, having brought ourselves into this state of mind, imagine that three revelations, or pretended revelations, of the Divine will are presented to us. At a glance, or after a slight intimation of their contents from the favourers of each, we see that the acceptance of one must mean the rejection of the other two. Can you fix upon any one test that would be more likely than any other to assist you to a right choice?

*T.* We don't know of any better test than the kind of conduct of man to man that was sanctioned, upheld or forbidden, as from Divine authority, in each.

*P.* Would you entirely overlook, so far as you could observe it, the conduct, or rather the demeanour of man to God?

*T.* That question implies an inference from our last answer, which is hardly fair. You did not ask us to enumerate all the tests, but to name the best test for judging which of three revelations, or pretended revelations, was the true one: it being felt that two out of three must be spurious or false. Confined to one test, we repeat that the best, so far as we can judge, is the conduct of man to man enjoined in each. There are insuperable difficulties in the way of judging the conduct or demeanour of man to his Maker, independently of his conduct to his fellow-man. A man's demeanour to his fellow-man may afford some criterion of his demeanour towards God. Whereas, experience shows that his demeanour, or more properly his averments and manifestations, towards God would be a very deceptive indication of his probable demeanour towards his fellow-man, and hence of his appreciation of the Divine attributes.

*P.* Would you judge of the attributes of the Deity, supposed to be set forth in these revelations, by the conduct enjoined upon man towards his fellow-men, rather than by the epithets of laudation lavished upon the Deity?

*T.* These epithets would have little weight with us. Among Eastern nations it is found that manifestations of subservieney and expressions of deference are seldom measured by the good



qualities of the despot on whom they are directed. More frequently the notes of adulation swell louder and louder as faith in the despot's goodness becomes fainter and fainter. As the despot sinks lower and lower in general estimation, his praise rises higher and higher; and the feelings of terror which he inspires are expressed in words of love. It is impossible for an intelligent man to address God, "the perfection of goodness and wisdom," as if he were an Eastern despot. The poor creature whose worship takes that form strives to conciliate a monster where he should adore a benefactor.

*P.* You have told me very plainly, how you would not judge. I am now anxious to learn how you would.

*T.* Setting aside other expressions, if we saw that the injunctions of conduct in one revelation breathed a spirit of love to man, sympathy with his weaknesses, a desire for his enlightenment and elevation, and gave encouragement to his exertions, promising support in his moments of despondency, and cheering him with hopes of a lasting reward for his efforts to improve himself and his fellow-men, and for his vigilance in avoiding any act that might inflict evil upon them; while in the others, the line of conduct enjoined upon mankind was unintelligible, contradictory, frivolous, inhuman, impracticable, and when practicable leading inevitably to human misery, intermingled with a recognition of the most absurd fables and most degrading superstitions, and countenancing fallacious explanations of phenomena which have since been dissipated by the light of progressively advancing sciences; we should not hesitate to accept the first and to reject its competitors.

*P.* Having accepted it, in common with a host of co-religionists, would your difficulties in deducing rules of life, or in obtaining a sanction for rules of life, deduced by other means or from other sources, be at an end?

*T.* Far from it. We might even think that the continuance of this difficulty was destined to be one of the means by which the whetting of our inquisitiveness, the exercising of our judg-

ment, and the elevating of our sentiments, might be kept up for our progressive improvement to the end of time.

*P.* I suppose it must be admitted that we are a long way from finding a concurrence of opinion, not to say unanimity of judgment, among the various Christian Churches as to whether rules of life were ever intended to be given in the Scriptures or are to be found there, or if in them; what they are. Whose guidance ought you to trust to in forming your own judgment on this difficult matter of interpretation?

*T.* We ought to trust to no judgment but our own, while gratefully accepting any assistance and seeking for any light that may help us to judge aright.

*P.* And in your turn ought you to render any assistance to others?

*T.* We conceive that to be our special duty—the spirit, if not the substance of it. If we can succeed in forming the understandings of our pupils, we shall be doing as much as they can expect from us towards qualifying them for good self-guidance as well as for a wise selection of their religion. For one may consider religion as a matter of choice when once it is held to be a duty with everybody to examine the grounds of the religion which he has been led to profess, whether by enlightening or blinding, awakening or lulling his intellectual faculties.

*P.* Let the intellectual faculties be ever so well cultivated, do you not consider that the judgment will still be liable to err in the choice of a religion or in the method of interpreting it?

*T.* We must leave this question to be answered by more sagacious men. We hope that, with better teaching and training, unanimity may be arrived at in matters of religion. At present, we can but contemplate with wonder the varieties of construction put upon the same collection of writings, and with pain the acrimony which each church or sect exhibits in defending its own and in assailing its neighbours' conflicting interpretations.

*P.* Do you teach religion, then, in the expectation that your pupils will help to swell the host of Christians at issue with one another in their interpretations, and little inclined to mutual toleration?

*T.* We hope for something better, although with our imperfect skill, and the present condition of society, we can hardly expect that our pupils will altogether escape in the midst of the prevailing epidemic of wrangling and intolerance.

*P.* Supposing you to concur in my views of the inexpediency of attempting to introduce Bible lessons into your schools, your lessons in religion, or more properly, your preparations for them, will be to lead your pupils, throughout the whole course of their instruction, to distinguish the true from the false, the good from the bad, with the conviction that an earnest desire to seek and act up to the good and the true, and to shun the bad and the false, can never be opposed to any religion, or interpretation of religion that ought to be held to. Do you not share in the fears of those who think that education so conducted will end in want of faith or in every variety of wild form and fancy under the name of religion?

*T.* So far from sharing in those fears, one of our expectations is that many of the wild forms and fancies that have sprung up under the shadow of Christianity will disappear. But should we be mistaken, what a benefit will be secured for mankind by sending forth the young from our schools inspired with a love of truth, with truthfulness of disposition, and with a determination to reject every so-called religion which represented God, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, explicitly or implicitly, as countenancing or abetting any conduct of man to man that tended to produce human misery!

*P.* Are you still troubled with some misgivings whether your method of conducting religious education may not lead away from that unanimity, which, if despaired of, is still longed for, and which seems to reward our efforts and to confirm us in the wisdom of our course in every other branch of instruction? Are there any grounds for suspecting that you may be mistaken?

We may throw some light upon this question by inquiring into the results of the better methods of teaching some of the many other subjects which it is thought desirable should be known by a portion, if not by the whole of society. 'Do our best teachers of chemistry, of mechanics, of astronomy, or of navigation, attempt to tie down their pupils at the very beginning of their course to the conclusions which they are to adopt at its close?

*T.* Their course is the very opposite. They desire that their pupils should take nothing for granted, accept nothing unproved.

*P.* And what is found to be the result of this recommendation to the young, not to yield their assent, either in thought or word, till conviction had been sought and found by observation, experiment, and reflection? Is it a Babel of conflicting opinions, or a collection of well-digested and coherent knowledge upon which, up to a certain point, there is not to be found a difference of opinion?

*T.* Perfect unanimity up to a certain point. Beyond that point, the boundary of knowledge as far as it has been pushed, the differences and doubts, and the controversies to which they give rise, are confined to the new discoveries which it is thought may be safely added to the vast mass of knowledge previously collected and systematized.

*P.* Has the application of this continually increasing mass of knowledge to the purposes of life, in agriculture, in manufactures, in locomotion, and in domestic arrangements, tended to confirm or to shake the evidence upon which this unanimity has been arrived at?

*T.* To confirm it. There can be no doubt that the field of knowledge over which unanimity prevails is extending day by day.

*P.* With an accumulation of knowledge so much beyond what was possessed by our forefathers, whereon to exercise our thoughts, does it seem as if we had any reason to fear the consequences of allowing the freest play to the inquiring, observing, experimenting, and reasoning faculties of the young, aided by such lights and suggestions as the best instructed adults in

every department of knowledge, actually disciplined for the purpose of teaching, can afford them ?

*T.* Rather, we have every reason to be most hopeful that by allowing to the young the freest exercise of all their faculties, we shall witness the progressively increasing extent of our knowledge, and also a progressively increasing unanimity in the acceptance, at least, of all that knowledge which is included under the name of physical science.

*P.* I thought you would hesitate to speak as confidently of the knowledge which is included under the name of moral or social science—the science of the conduct of man to man.

*T.* We should scarcely be warranted in doing that. We speak according to our limited experience ; and till people in general have acknowledged that there is such a science, and have introduced the teaching of it in their schools, we can only venture to say, we have no reason to doubt that, when instruction in social science is conducted on the same plan as instruction in the physical sciences, there will be the same inevitable gravitating towards true conclusions and unanimity in their acceptance.

*P.* What is there at this time to hold back the spread of social science more than that of the physical sciences ?

*T.* If we are not mistaken, the continued disregard or neglect of it is to be accounted for by the tenacity with which superstition and prejudice have always been observed to maintain their hold. A reluctance to adopt, if not a readiness to resist whatever threatens to disturb inveterate habits, will strengthen the tyranny of superstitions and prejudices of long standing. These formidable opponents to improvements in knowledge and conduct have not combated in former times, nor are they combating now, in their own names. They assume the garb of religion. They resemble the barbarous leaders of a barbarous soldiery, who deaden the little intelligence and humanity which might induce hesitation in committing acts of atrocity, by urging them to stand up for their "holy religion," while liquor is dealt out freely to infuriate them.

*P.* Do you despair of seeing superstition and prejudice compelled to relax their hold, and religion elevated in their place to assist and to urge forward instruction in the "science of conduct"?

*T.* The history of the progress of physical science forbids despair. We need not repeat the oft-told tale. Step after step, victory after victory, up to this time, has been gained against superstition and prejudice, despite their activity in attracting recruits to their ranks by claiming to be religious. We have a succession of hard fought battles to look back upon, victories to rejoice in, fruits to enjoy. The same enemies of mankind, in the same disguise, are still doing their worst; but there are evident symptoms that the end of their reign is approaching. They have affirmed that there is no such science as social science, that there is no necessity for it; that the revealed will of God, as interpreted through their medium, suffices for man's guidance, and that to think otherwise is the height of presumption and wickedness, to be visited with condign punishment in the next world, if it escape in this. The fears, affections, and imaginations of mankind have all combined to give efficacy to the threats of Divine vengeance represented as ready to be inflicted upon misbelief, doubt or unbelief upon matters beyond human ken, or the depths of which science had not been able to fathom. But the repeated assaults of the astronomer, the chemist, and the electrician, have proved too strong for superstition and prejudice to resist.

*P.* You cannot point, like teachers of physical science, to results extending over many years in proof of the certainty with which conclusions anticipated by the teacher of social science will be accepted by the learner. Your position as teachers of that science resembles that of Benjamin Franklin, when he earned his testimonial of "Eripuit coelo fulmen," or of George Stephenson, who felt when he exhibited the "Rocket," between Liverpool and Manchester, that locomotives and the rail would supersede fast coaches and the common road wherever speed and economy were sought for. Like them,

you must be prepared to find few willing to trust to your judgment, and fewer still capable of judging for themselves.

*T.* And, like the early followers of former inventors, originators, and promulgators of new truths, we must be inspired with determination and energy to execute the task assigned to us. Our faith in the goodness of our cause and the importance of our mission is not to be weakened because the prejudices and inertness of our generation either oppose or decline to assist us.

*P.* As a compensation for the disadvantage at which you are as compared with teachers of physical science, may you not take higher ground than they can with the so-called religious world?

*T.* We may. We proclaim that the knowledge which we are striving to impart in our schools is an essential part of religion; that religion without it is a superstition, or, worse than superstition, a sham; for superstition has at least one merit—one claim to respectability—it is sincere, and that cannot be said for a sham.

*P.* Are you not reversing the order in which religion and education are commonly presented to the public by many who are looked up to as authorities? Do they not say that education must be based upon the Bible?

*T.* We dare say that the worthy folks who repeat this hackneyed phrase intend to convey some meaning, and some intimation of their wishes, as to what they are willing to co-operate to bring about, and what they would work hard to prevent. Let us try to give intelligent expression to their thoughts, and if possible to agree with them, or to ascertain, if we cannot, where we differ. We will suppose it to be their conviction that education ought to be considered principally as a means of reading and understanding the Bible. Although we would not confine our views of education within those limits, we are not precluded from concurring in the thought so far as we can understand it, and in acting upon it. But must not children learn to read, before they can read the Bible? Must they not have acquired some slight knowledge of physical science before they can reconcile modern discoveries with Scripture narrative?

Must they not have learned how to distinguish between good and bad in human conduct, before they can study with benefit, or even without damage, records teeming with evidences of the cruelties, the perfidies, the debaucheries, and the superstitions of ages of barbarism? Surely pupils keenly sensitive to the distinction between right and wrong, good and bad, are more capable than others of judging how and in what sense God, the fountain of all goodness, can be said to have approved, sanctioned, and enjoined acts and conduct which the pen of a decent writer can do no more than allude to, and which the religious parent would defer, if not avoid altogether, presenting to his children.

P. I do not see how a religious use can be made of the Bible in schools. Mature minds alone are competent to master its contents. None but immature minds congregate in schools. The utmost that can be done for them there before they take their departure is so to prepare, and bud, or graft them, as that they may give promise of bursting into a happy maturity. Most people will admit that the minds of children are too immature to be capable of understanding what are classed among the higher branches of knowledge, upon which all who study them are found to come to a common agreement. Nevertheless, few will be found to assent to our deduction from this acknowledged immaturity, that it is inexpedient and irreligious to thrust upon children "the Book," replete though it be with sublimities, to the height of which the greatest minds can hardly soar; with ambiguities which the acutest intellects can rarely clear up; with apparent contradictions not easy to explain; and with records of acts and sentiments difficult to reconcile with an unfaltering faith in the goodness and wisdom of God. Our interest lies, however, rather with what we would introduce and keep in our schools, for the purpose of rearing up intelligent and well-conducted men, than with what we would exclude; and we will examine the ground already gone over to make sure that nothing has been omitted which is requisite for producing that state of understanding and that



tone of feeling on which hopes of the religious character may reasonably rest.

*T.* We look forward confidently to the time—and not a very distant time—when many of those who are insisting upon the use, or, as you consider, and we are beginning to consider it, the misuse of the Bible, as a school-book, will also insist upon its being accompanied or preceded by instruction conducted in a very different spirit to that which generally prevails. If they can once be brought to see that to defer is not to reject the Bible, but rather, if children be wisely dealt by, to take precautions that the Bible shall be in the hands of men capable of appreciating it—in capable of extracting out of it justifications for every description of cruelty, folly, and impertinence, whatever else is desirable will speedily follow.

A teacher, gifted with all the qualifications that a mature intelligence and good disposition can derive from the Bible, is the only Bible adapted to the immaturity of childhood. And he will proceed to unfold himself—the child's Bible—by his daily life and tuition, progressively as the children around him are capable of reading one page after another.

*P.* Could you not give your unconvinced, or half-convinced friends, for I fancy you are beginning to make a little way with them, some notions of your course of Bible instruction, by turning over a few pages with them as you would with your children ?

*T.* We would not pass lightly over the title-page and introduction. In other words, we preface our instruction with the cultivation of a friendly, confiding intercourse between the children and ourselves. We endeavour to make sure that they will always look to us for consolation in their sorrows, attention to their wrongs, real or supposed, assistance and advice in their difficulties, and explanations of their doubts and misapprehensions. With this preparation, we keep clear of habits of concealment and insincerity. We establish what we think may be called, without offence to religion or reason, a Bible-basis of education, truthfulness of disposition, and a desire to learn, that is, to seek truth.

*P.* And with such a beginning, are you relieved from all apprehension of being thwarted in the course which you are about to enter upon, or of being disappointed in the end or object at which you are aiming?

*T.* No apprehension might imply no pains to guard against disappointment. But our apprehension is less than it would be with any other kind of beginning. Many of the persons who interest themselves about the education of the young seem to forget how unhesitatingly they rely upon some results, while they doubt about others. We submit that the doubts may originate in the ill-contrived or ill-directed efforts employed to produce the results aimed at. All people learn to speak their native tongues. Comparatively few speak other languages than their own; and fewer still speak them fluently and correctly. The causes of these differences are obvious. We have no doubt of what the result will be when, with the aid of models and experiments, the attention of children is fixed upon the common pump, the air-pump, the force-pump, the squirt, the pop-gun, the barometer, the thermometer, the seconds-clock, the phenomena of combustion, of breathing, of the succession of day and night, of the seasons, and so on.

*P.* Whose fault will it be if, while this instruction is going on, the interest of the children is not sustained, backwardness is shown in stating difficulties and seeking explanations, or indifference is felt to have their instruction carried forward to other phenomena still mysteries to them?

*T.* Their teacher's, whose fault it will also be if, in his instruction in the phenomena of industrial life, he fails to elicit from them a recognition that, as a means of "good and holy living," men must work diligently, intelligently, and skilfully; that they must save; that they must be cautious in contracting engagements, and scrupulous in fulfilling them; strict in respecting the property of others, careful of their own; and ready to co-operate for the protection of property against those who will not respect it; and be sober, punctual, and obliging besides.

*P.* The result of my experience coincides entirely with your own. In maintaining these views, however, you must bear in mind that you are running counter to the strong convictions of a numerous school of divines, who hold that men could never have arrived at these truths, and accordingly could not teach them to their children, unless they had learned them from the Bible. But it is consolatory to know that there are other divines who agree with us that the Bible no more contains expositions of rules of conduct for men than it contains expositions of the forces which regulate all the movements and changes of the physical world. If your "Christian friends" should be among the former, and overpower you with their denunciations on account of your present leanings, you can, in case of need, fly to the latter for spiritual support.

*T.* You would recommend us, we are sure, to be self-supporting, spiritually as well as physically. We are at a loss to comprehend how anybody can assert that industry, temperance, honesty, and frugality were not held to be virtues before the Christian era, or are not held to be so among the Chinese and other Eastern nations, whose numbers so greatly exceed those of the Christians. In common with them, we have to confess and deplore that the practice of these virtues is sadly behind the profession of them. Christian teachers would do well to addict themselves a little more sedulously to the teaching of these virtues, and to the training in their observance, if they would not forego the most powerful means of "propagating the Gospel in foreign parts," the opportunity of holding up before the eyes of the heathen the conduct and bearing of those who profess a belief in the Gospel.

*P.* If we and the latter class of divines are correct, reliance on Bible-lessons to impart a knowledge of these and other virtues, and to supply the place of measures for careful training, would go a long way to account for the short-comings in knowledge and practice still observable in the world. If the method of instruction which you are following should, contrary to our expectation, lead to varieties of interpretation and expression,

such varieties will be confined to those portions of doctrine bearing more upon the conduct of man towards God than towards his fellow-men.

*T.* Will it not be objected here that we show ourselves more indifferent or less particular about the conduct of man to God than about the conduct of man to man ?

*P.* And may we not answer that the only sure mode of judging of man's conduct towards God is through his conduct to his fellow-men ? And in striving to judge of the comparative results of teaching morality and religion through the Bible, instead of teaching the Bible through morality and religion, will it not be appropriate to put some such question as this : Out of which school will men take the clearest perception of the distinctions between good and bad in the conduct of man to man throughout all the relations of life ?

*T.* Our answer to this question, and, as we think, the answer of all teachers of ordinary intelligence, who can be induced to give serious attention to what you are advocating and exemplifying, must be : Out of schools in which your method of instruction is adopted. In other schools, the epithets good and bad, religious and irreligious, pious and impious, right and wrong, wise and foolish, are liberally enough applied ; but it is not attempted to explain how one may be distinguished from the other.

*P.* And what habit is apt to fasten itself upon the young who have not been led to make these distinctions ?

*T.* That of applying these epithets or of listening to the application of them by others without recognizing any intelligible standard by which to judge whether they are correctly applied.

*P.* A smile of incredulity will greet you should you pretend to turn out boys from your schools capable of anything better.

*T.* For that we must be prepared. Teachers who have never seized the thought that all instruction ought to be subservient to forming the capacity of judging aright, and all

training subservient to creating a willingness, an ~~willingness~~, a disposition to act in obedience to that judgment, ~~can form~~ a conception of the effect that will be produced upon ~~character~~ after a habit has been formed of estimating the goodness of conduct by its tendency to promote well-being. Steadily rising from the simplest to the most complicated cases, a progressive course of the most improving intellectual exercises is presented. A sense of duty, a seriousness, a conscientiousness is felt in forming judgments, in giving expression to them, in applying epithets. The truthfulness of disposition and the desire to learn—to add truth to truth, the basis on which we build, will be strengthened and consolidated as the superstructure proceeds.

*P.* Might not what you call truthfulness and love of truth wear, to some of your friends, the appearance of arrogance, of presumption, of obstinacy, of intractability?

*T.* If these friends of ours were in the habit of applying epithets, whether of praise or blame, to God or man, in such a manner as to show plainly, or even to convey the impression, that no intelligible meaning could be attached to their words, our boys' truthfulness and love of truth would certainly make them pause and decline to pronounce in words what their understandings would not justify to them. If compulsion were attempted resistance might follow.

*P.* Must not such teaching as this—must not the capacity of measuring good and evil by the effect upon human well-being inevitably throw a new light upon many religious notions?

*T.* It cannot fail to do so. It will put an extinguisher upon the monstrous practice of applying epithets to the Almighty, the nearest approach to justification for which is, that no meaning is attached to them; in other words, that they are uttered thoughtlessly and irreverently. Boys from our schools will be incapable of addressing God—the perfection of goodness and wisdom—as angry, jealous, repentant, sorrowing, and rejoicing, or of accepting such epithets, without reserving to

themselves the right of interpreting them in a sense not derogatory to those high attributes which they know how to appreciate and to adore.

*P.* How will it affect the practice of specially attributing to God many of the evils and calamities by which the world is visited from time to time, some that in the existing state of knowledge men are unable to guard against, and others which through carelessness, or indolence, or incapacity, engendered by child-neglect, they had failed to avert?

*T.* It must lead to the discontinuance of a practice, offensive alike to reason and religion, of singling out occasions of disaster and suffering for invoking God's holy name and deprecating His vengeance, as if He were the author of them in particular—not of the whole scheme of the universe, the conditions of which it is man's business to study, to comprehend and to apply.

*P.* How are the perpetuation, recurrence and aggravation of causes of human suffering likely to be affected by the abandonment of a practice of imploring Divine intervention, when those causes have ripened into effects from which, for the time, there is no escape?

*T.* For the better, because its abandonment will be a sign that men are religiously devoting themselves to the study of the causes of good and evil, and to the guidance of their conduct so as to bring about the recurrence of the first, and to prevent the recurrence of the second. Pestilence and famine, epidemics and other scourges, involving multitudes in misery, are gradually disappearing before the improved religious feelings which condemn as impious and irreverent applications to God to ward off calamitous effects, the causes of which there had been no attempt to study or avert.

*P.* If we are not mistaken in our convictions that destitution, vice, and crime will afflict society so long as children are debarred from education, and from education at least up to the mark that we have pointed to, what must we say of the practice of those who pray that society may be relieved from

these afflictions, while they make little or no effort to provide the needful education ?

*T.* That they are adding to the proofs already too abundant, that "to pray" is one thing, and "to be religious" another.

*P.* There does not seem to be any very wide difference of opinion between us as to what constitutes a religious man. May I now understand that, if left at liberty to carry out education to the best of your own judgment, you would expect to send forth children from your schools who will, when men, come up to a standard of religious character satisfactory to all reasonable judges ; who will, when men, be acquainted with their duties, disposed to perform them, and capable of reading, understanding, and appreciating the Bible ?

*T.* It would not become us to say that we feel confident of our ability to train up such men ; but we believe that by our method of education we may be more hopeful of success than by any other method.

*P.* I share in your belief. The difficulty for you will be to convince the public that a method which aims at no more than cultivating truthfulness of disposition, and so feeding and directing that inquisitiveness and desire of knowledge and aptitude inherent in children, as to lead on to the love of truth and excellence, will not fail to develop also the capacity to understand the Bible and to do credit in conduct to the lessons deducible from its pages.

*T.* We shall do our best to bring the public to adopt our views by maintaining our schools in a high state of efficiency, and by inviting inspection and a careful examination of the work as it is going on in them. If the reasonableness of our expectations, and the judgment with which our methods are acted upon, fail to make the impression which we hope for, we must be content to abide the result of our work after it has been completed, in the attainments, the demeanour, and the conduct of the men whom we shall have educated as boys.

*P.* We hear a great deal, as you know, of what your friends all the religious difficulty, or, as I call it, the irreligious

difficulty—one of the main obstacles in the way of that general diffusion of education agreed by everybody to be desirable. Would not this difficulty be removed if we could bring all churches and sects to place more reliance on the truth of their own tenets, and on their capacity to expound them to men of mature and vigorous understandings?

*T.* It would. We fear, however, that few churches and sects carry their notions of faith so far beyond words as to be prepared to submit their tenets to so severe an ordeal. With the course of instruction which we pursue, it seems inevitable that the children will learn and adopt the fundamentals of all religion—at all events, of every denomination of the Christian religion; they being a collection of truths as plain and simple as the plainest and simplest truths on any subjects taught in schools, and concerning the eventual understanding and adoption of which by learners, no teacher ever entertains the slightest doubt. The peculiarities, the ceremonies, the observances, the forms, the pageantries, and the rites which distinguish one church or sect from others could not, of course, command the same unanimous acquiescence.

*P.* By your account, it would almost appear as if they who interposed their religious difficulties to prevent the diffusion of education were determined that children should either be shaped into Christians after their pattern, or not be allowed to grow up into Christians at all.



## ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

*T.* We trust you will not consider us encroaching on your kindness, or disposed thoughtlessly to pester you with our difficulties; but we must confess to be unequal to answer all the objections and cautions that are urged against our attempts to act upon your views, and to introduce into our schools lessons in imitation of those which we have so often listened to from you.

*P.* Will not these difficulties continue to perplex you, so long as you act upon my views, and give lessons in imitation of those you have heard from me? Before you can approach perfection in teaching, or expect to attain readiness in meeting objectors or detractors, must you not act upon your own views, and draw your lessons direct from them?

*T.* If we were not impressed with the necessity of attaining to the capacity suggested by your questions, we should be unworthy of the pains that you have taken in our behalf. We cannot, however, flatter ourselves with more than being on the road to attain that capacity,—a road which we should probably never have travelled, but for you, and on which we may yet be long detained, if you leave us entirely to our own resources.

*P.* Are you warranted in adopting any views, accepting any conclusions, and in acting confidently upon them, so long as objections are urged involving contradictions which you cannot explain? Are not apparent contradictions unexplained difficulties, through which all principles must pass, before they can be honestly and unreservedly accepted, and also through which

all learners must pass before they can be said to have made the principles their own ?

*T.* It is our deep sense of the responsibility which we are incurring, and of our present unfitness to do justice to the new views and methods, while our confidence in much hitherto received without question has been utterly destroyed, that drives us to hang upon you for the continuance of that help which has already conferred such benefits upon us.

*P.* What are these new difficulties or objections which have crossed your path, and apparently discomposed you ?

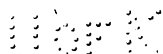
*T.* We have been remonstrated with and reproached in tones almost conveying a threat to put a stop to our freedom of action. The method which we have borrowed from you, and applied, in spite of our want of experience, with so much satisfaction to our boys, will make them; we are told, pert, presumptuous, disputatious, disobedient, cold, hard, calculating, sceptical, irreverent, and much besides that nobody would wish to see in the young.

*P.* Here is certainly a formidable array of bad qualities charged as the effect of your teaching, and you might well express your dismay at such results unlooked for by you, and which, if they did come upon you by surprise, nobody would be more anxious than yourselves to guard against and prevent in future. Have you observed any increased symptoms of the odious qualities pointed at in the demeanour and carriage of your boys since you introduced your new method ?

*T.* We should say quite the reverse. We never before met with such uninterrupted deference and attention, never resorted so little to threats and impositions, never found our boys so tractable—so amenable to appeals to their reason and sense of duty.

*P.* And how is it that the improved demeanour of your boys should have escaped the notice of those who have been disturbing your peace ?

*T.* We fancy that the words were spoken in anger, and without much thought. People unaccustomed to see boys taking



pains to form their own opinions, and hesitating to adopt without examination the opinions of others thrust upon them, get annoyed at meeting with inquiries in the place of ready acquiescence—with what, perhaps, they call resistance and contumaciousness.

*P.* And when they smart at being unexpectedly pulled up, and asked for an explanation which they cannot give, they discover that your style of instruction is unfitted for children.

*T.* Yes ; and they tell us that the memories and fancies of children should be more appealed to than their reasoning faculties ; assuming that, because we lead the children to exercise their reasoning faculties, we neglect the exercise of other faculties : which we do not.

*P.* This is by no means an uncommon form of administering censure undeserved. Persons propose to fill up gaps, or to supply deficiencies which they have noticed. Straightway they, who ought to be ashamed that such deficiencies had not long ago been observed and supplied by themselves, object that attention should be given to other things besides, as if anybody ever pretended or could maintain that it should not. If I remonstrate with a man for neglecting to whitewash his house, what would be thought of his reproaching me vehemently for wishing to prevent his looking after his furniture ?

*T.* It is almost beyond endurance to be thwarted as we are in the discharge of our duties.

*P.* You must not make matters worse by neglecting to deal with the stings inflicted in the way most likely to neutralize or counteract the venom in them.

*T.* What use is there in our attempting to reason with our tormentors, if they will not be reasoned with ?

*P.* More than would appear at the first glance. Opportunities may arise, when they will be compelled, if not to reason, or to listen to reason, to bend to the wills of those who can be influenced by reason. Suppose, now, as you know more of these men than I do, you endeavour to answer me in their behalf, while I try to extract from them reasons, if they have

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any, for their objections to your teaching the children to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, wise and foolish, and so on. I will begin by asking—Do they object to your giving religious instruction ?

*T.* No. They cannot do that. Their objection to you is that you exclude religion from your teaching.

*P.* This misrepresentation of my teaching being a repetition of what I have long been accustomed to from them, I am not taken by surprise. But our business now is neither with what I teach, nor with what I omit to teach. It appears that I can please them neither way. I want to get from them, through you, what they are doing, or what they would be doing. As you say they do not object to your giving religious instruction, do they object to your giving that instruction in your own way, or are they indifferent what religion you teach, and how you teach it ?

*T.* They certainly have been raising objections to the method which we are now anxious to introduce. But their answer would be that they are far from indifferent ; and that they desire the true religion to be taught, and in a way likely to induce feelings of piety and reverence in the learners.

*P.* Already you see the advantage of not despairing of the influence of reason. We have discovered a common basis of agreement on which to rest before prosecuting an inquiry, which, if it will not land us in agreement, may teach us where and why we differ. True religion only is to be taught, and in a way likely to induce feelings of piety and reverence in the children. As this implies that what commonly goes by the name of religion may be true or false, and that the methods of teaching may be well or ill adapted to generate feelings of piety and reverence, let us proceed to inquire which is to be considered the true religion that ought to be taught ?

*T.* The Christian religion.

*P.* But as we have many Christian churches, each of which interprets differently in some respects, and differences of interpretation in the same church, we must inquire if, amid all

these differences, there be any articles of belief in which all are agreed.

*T.* We cannot err in offering "belief in God" as a first and fundamental article of belief among all churches and denominations of Christians.

*P.* Now as neither you nor your friends, however obstructive they may be to you in other respects, would wish religious instruction to stop here, as you would deem it incumbent upon you that children should learn who and what God is for whom their love and reverence are claimed; how would you represent Him?

*T.* As a Being of infinite goodness and wisdom.

*P.* And how does he show His goodness to mankind?

*T.* In many ways; but as regards our special purpose, the instruction of our children, in enjoining men so to conduct themselves towards one another, as to promote the comfort and happiness of all.

*P.* And is it wished to inspire children with love and reverence for this Being, exalted as He is above other beings—the perfection of goodness and wisdom?

*T.* On this point, again, there can be no difference of opinion.

*P.* Your vocation makes you familiar with the capabilities of children. You know how easy it is to bring them acquainted with matters unknown and unsolvable by the most cultivated men of former days, provided the proofs on which the knowledge rests are placed before them, step by step, for them to examine and digest; and how impossible it is to impart this knowledge, if any links in the chain of proof and exposition be omitted. Do you not endeavour to follow a course, based upon your experience of child-nature, tenderly and yet earnestly, with much or little repetition and illustration, according to your estimate of the progress and capacity of your pupils?

*T.* That is our aim, however far we may be from accomplishing what we aim at.

*P.* Would you, from time to time, as your children might

be supposed to have reached certain stages of progress, set them to expound what they held to be knowledge—to prove the truth of the propositions in which it was expressed, the statements of facts, and of the inferences deduced from them, so that no doubt might remain in your minds that the words uttered by them were representations of real knowledge, not counterfeits cleverly used to conceal its absence?

*T.* We also endeavour to apply this test, and it is gratifying to see how the children delight in an exercise which enables them to confirm what they know, to correct their errors, and to withdraw or modify assertions not borne out by proof, or irreconcilable with other propositions which cannot be shaken.

*P.* Might you not, by pursuing a different course, bring the children to a habit and readiness of prating about, not the things which they ought to know, but the names of the things—repeating words and phrases out of books?

*T.* We might do this; and we fear it is too often done.

*P.* Which course of instruction appears to you most likely to produce pert and presumptuous pupils?

*T.* There can be no doubt the latter. A course of instruction in which to pause, to inquire, to put forth an interpretation or explanation, with the knowledge that it is to be defended and established, or to be modified or retracted, can scarcely do otherwise than contribute to modesty and diffidence in manner, as well as to integrity and self-reliance in understanding.

*P.* Raising our thoughts to the sublimest of all the subjects that can occupy the mind—religion: how would you act towards your boys in regard to that? Should we begin by teaching them to lisp the name of God, and to characterize Him in their prayers and thoughts as good, just, merciful, glad, sorry, angry, powerful, repentant, revengeful, wise, &c., or should we first enable them to understand the attributes, on account of which some of these epithets may, and others may not, be prefixed to His name?

*T.* The latter course seems best adapted to awaken feelings

of intelligent reverence towards the Almighty, and to secure children against that degradation of their own understandings, and that impiety towards God, which takes the form of heaping epithet upon epithet upon Him—the perfection of goodness and wisdom—let those epithets be ever so incongruous, and ever so much in contradiction one with another.

*P.* Do you consider that a capacity to appreciate the Divine attributes is to be expected in very young children?

*T.* Scarcely.

*P.* Is it desirable to build up this capacity as speedily as is compatible with stability?

*T.* Most desirable; and the building it up effectually ought to be considered one of the main purposes of religious education.

*P.* You would not imitate those disreputable builders who scamp the foundations of their houses and other important parts which, being covered in, escape the notice of the inexperienced and confiding. The tenants who are entrapped into the occupation discover after a time, through perpetual annoyance and expense, and perhaps through deteriorated health, how grievously they have been imposed upon, in spite of the showy decorations by which they had been captivated.

*T.* We have seen enough to convince us that a young man sent forth into the world familiar with Scripture phrases, but a stranger to religious convictions and feelings, is all the more endangered and the more dangerous by his Scripture phrases. Through them he imposes upon himself as well as upon others; they supply him with ready excuses for his follies and iniquities, for his commission of evil and his omissions of good; they are the paper, putty, and paint, which conceal the cracks in the walls and the dry-rot in the timbers.

*P.* Does it behove us to be specially vigilant and careful lest notions derogatory to Divine excellence should stealthily ensconce themselves in the children's minds?

*T.* Too much care could hardly be taken to prevent such "leprous instilment."

*P.* Nobody but an empty boaster would deny the difficulty as well as the delicacy of the attempt to cultivate religious feelings in the minds of children, guarding at the same time against the intrusion of thoughts derogatory to Divine goodness and wisdom. It may help us to a knowledge of means and methods available for the task, if you would give me some idea how you would set to work with your own families, with children between whom and yourselves there is no opportunity for the interference of ignorant obstructors.

*T.* We should limit any activity of effort to induce religious feelings, in the first instance, to so watching our own conduct, and so directing the discipline of the family, as to raise in the minds of our children a sense of our unswerving love and kindness to them. We would observe the effect of this conduct upon their dispositions, and hope gradually to see developed in them a reliance on our love and care for them, and on our wisdom and justice, the consequences of which would be affection, respect, and obedience from themselves towards us. This would serve as a foundation whereon to build love and reverence towards God the Father of all—supremely good and wise, and obedience to His will.

*P.* I approve your method thus far ; but my office must be to point out the hindrances which will trouble you in carrying out your purpose. You may not be altogether free from infirmities of temper. Squabbles will occur among the children and their companions ; and ill conduct in the household, as well as from without, must be expected.

*T.* It is no part of our plan to hold ourselves up to our children as models of perfection. We would do nothing to prevent their understanding that, great as was our love, God's love was incomparably greater ; and earnest as might be our wish to act wisely and rightly, and successful as we might appear in the main to them, God's wisdom and goodness were above anything that man could hope to attain.

*P.* Your children cannot be expected altogether to escape suffering from illness and accident. Will they be disposed to



attribute any portion of their suffering to your negligence in protecting and saving them ?

*T.* We do not imagine that such thoughts would arise, although we will not say that they might not. There could not be much difficulty, however, in bringing the children to comprehend that they, in common with their parents and all other human beings, are liable to suffering from illness, accident, and want ; and that the power of their parents is limited. Children will readily learn that, by wisdom and care, their parents can do much to prevent illness and accidents and want, and to alleviate the suffering from them when they do occur, but that they cannot keep them away altogether.

*P.* When you are magnifying the goodness and wisdom and power of God to your children, would they not ask how it was that God, so overflowing as He is with goodness and wisdom, did not put forth His power to protect His creatures from suffering ?

*T.* These questions do arise with all children ; and a very little reflection ought to satisfy us that the omnipotence of the Almighty is a theme that must be reserved for riper years.

*P.* And if their understandings were to rebel against your wish to impose silence upon their efforts to learn how to reconcile the existence of evil with the goodness, the wisdom, and the power of God, how would you act ?

*T.* We would do nothing that should indicate a wish to impose any restriction upon their freedom of thought and inquiry. But we would not hesitate to declare to them our sense of their incapacity, irremovable except with years, to engage in the investigation of a subject that proves too difficult for many who attain to maturity. We should hope that our influence would enable us to reconcile them to repress their inquisitiveness and suspend their judgment, while following up with energy, under our guidance, those studies which may make their understandings competent to appreciate God's attributes and to interpret His will.

*P.* Will your sense of the intellectual feebleness of children

lead you to defer further efforts for forming their religious characters?

*T.* We do not see how we can be charged with deferring efforts for forming religious characters, if we are doing the very best that child-nature admits of our doing. Premature and ill-directed attempts might prevent rather than promote the formation of religious characters. We could do nothing better than teach our young children elementary arithmetic in order to make accomplished mathematicians of them. Proficiency at maturity in any branch of knowledge is not to be expected where the immaturity of childhood is disregarded.

*P.* I am curious to hear a little more what your expectations may be from this foundation.

*T.* They are very great; and we will try to explain why a religious character is not to be built on the intellect alone; and yet the intellect must neither be imposed upon nor offended. We look to domestic influences for the growth of a love for goodness, of a desire for wisdom, and of an inclination to love and respect those in whom these two qualities are to be found united. Intelligence gradually expanded in children animated with these affections must yield religious fruits in abundance. While their intelligence and good feelings are thus ripening in harmony, will it not be a great advantage for them to be spared the imposition of a mass of unintelligible and contradictory dogmas setting all sense and good feeling at defiance?

*P.* Can you expect that they will escape coming in contact with much of the fabulous and unintelligible jargon which so many are attempting to pass off as religion?

*T.* We ought not to expect, nor do we, that they will. Our business should be to prepare them for suffering contact without contamination. What better safeguard can we hope for against those who, under the name of religion, would utter their foul aspersions upon the Almighty, than a love and respect for goodness and wisdom?

*P.* Is not the rejection of what we call fabulous and unin-

telligible sufficient to bring down upon those who avow it the imputation of infidelity?

*T.* It is; they who make it being unconscious of the proof which they are thereby giving of their own infidelity, if we must use that term. To believe in the infinite goodness and wisdom of God, is to disbelieve that any thing cruel or silly can be countenanced by Him. To believe that any thing cruel or silly has been sanctioned by Him, is to want faith in his goodness and wisdom. Which is the infidelity to be denounced? which the faith to be upheld?

*P.* You proceed upon the conviction that children, like grown-up people, will venture occasionally out of their depth. As you cannot prevent this dangerous practice, you do the next best thing. You teach them to swim, so that they may survive and regain land. You must be anxious to ascertain from time to time that they are acquiring strength, sagacity, and self-reliance enough to buffet against the eddies, and steer through the reefs and rocks, which might prevent their return. Will not many of the perplexing statements and wild assertions in the name of religion be addressed to them by persons who, by their position, almost command deference, especially from the young?

*T.* They will. But it is nothing new that the emancipation of each generation from the weaknesses which cramped its predecessor is beset with difficulties. Deference to age and authority is a duty; but deference to truth, and goodness, and wisdom, is a greater. As no deference towards ourselves would be exacted from them which was not subordinated to that which is greater than ourselves, they will not be predisposed to pay greater deference to others less intimately attached to them.

*P.* You must excuse a little repetition; but I wish to make quite sure that I enter fully into your plans. The foundation on which you rely for the superstructure of a religious character is—habits of good conduct formed by imitation and example, and strengthened by feelings of love, gratitude, and respect;

and intelligence, day by day, awakening to a wider and juster appreciation of the distinctions between right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust. You cannot conceive any better preparation whereon to form a mind capable of contemplating and appreciating "the perfection of goodness and wisdom." Is this a fair statement of your scheme of religious teaching and training for children?

*T.* Yes. And we believe it to be the readiest and safest, although we give offence to those who charge us with neglecting religion, because we decline to take God's holy name in vain, or to invoke it falsely and unworthily.

*P.* Knowing as you do the sea of error and absurdity through which your pupils will have to steer, will you leave them to embark upon it with no other preparation, or will you attempt to give them some inkling of what they have to expect?

*T.* It is our duty not only to form habits and impart intelligence wherewith our pupils may successfully combat errors and absurdities, but to apprise them, as far as possible, of the forms in which error and absurdity will disguise themselves so as to undermine good habits and outwit intelligence.

*P.* The minds over which you keep watch being confessedly immature and incapable of grappling with all the difficulties inherent in religious subjects, how can you circumscribe these difficulties so as to present a satisfactory view as far as it extends, and yet carry conviction of its perfect fairness?

*T.* By avowing plainly what we omit and why, and showing that our omissions cannot affect the conclusions to be drawn from what we retain for examination.

*P.* What do your omissions consist of?

*T.* The difficulties involved in the co-existence of evil and omnipotence, as irreconcilable with infinite goodness and wisdom.

*P.* And what do you retain?

*T.* Quite enough for the continuous exercise of a progressively expanding intelligence: the exposition and enumeration of all the kinds of conduct of man to man conducive to the

general well-being, which kinds of conduct must be conformable to the will of God, being in perfect harmony with Divine goodness and wisdom.

*P.* Might it not be objected that since God appears quite tolerant of the physical causes, so he might be of the moral causes of human misery?

*T.* If any children could raise such an objection, which we doubt, we would meet it by directing them to an exercise quite within the range of their limited powers—to an examination of what religion is not and cannot be, of what the Almighty cannot be shown to sanction or to have sanctioned—an admirable preparation for that higher exercise of the more matured powers in rising to the knowledge of what religion is.

*P.* And how will you shape your course in order to bring about this exercise of your children's powers upon what religion is not and cannot be?

*T.* We shall turn to account the line of instruction for which we are indebted to you. You will readily understand that our children, from the earliest age, are learning, little by little, how men have contrived to supply themselves with the means of comfortable existence ready prepared for their use and enjoyment; how they cultivate the ground, manufacture raw produce, build, furnish, intercommunicate, train the young to follow in and improve upon the ways of their fathers, provide hospitals for the sick and maimed, and asylums for the destitute, the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the insane; and how men may hope, by improved conduct, to obtain a yet higher state of enjoyment, and still further to mitigate suffering which it has proved beyond their strength to prevent. While this instruction is going on, such questions as these will inevitably arise: Ought men to have conducted themselves so as to have brought about the present state of things? Ought they to persevere in a similar course of conduct? Ought they to try to improve upon it, in the hope of still further extending human happiness—staving off human misery?—and why?

*P.* And you think teachers will have little claim to respect

who cannot call forth in their pupils the intelligence to approve what their forefathers have accomplished towards making life an improved inheritance, and what is being done to continue the improvement for which there is so much room; and the ambition to become qualified to perform their part in the work without which the good so far gained can neither be preserved nor extended.

*T.* Just so. Neither you nor we have any doubt that it is possible so to conduct education as to impress upon children the conviction that the comfortable existence of each and of all depends upon conduct, and that therefore it is the duty of each to himself and to others so to conduct himself as to promote the general well-being; and, as a preliminary, to learn how to conduct himself and to discipline himself to the performance of what he knows to be his duty.

*P.* The repetition of the divine precept, "Love one another," unaccompanied by such instruction and capacity of self-discipline, would be nothing more than the pretence of a religious education. An injunction to do good and to abstain from evil, without the ability to distinguish one from the other, and without the disposition to give a preference to one over the other, would carry no weight with those to whom it might be given, and do small honour to those who could give it.

*T.* Our present task is to show that an education conducted as we suggest is not only an admirable preparation for religious knowledge and feeling, but a preservative—an antidote against that corrupting and poisonous matter so frequently administered as religion to children, incapacitating them when arrived at adult age to understand or to cherish, or to do what religion enjoins.

*P.* Let us now have some examples of the deleterious matter with which you apprehend your pupils may be assailed, and against which your course of instruction is to act as an antidote.

*T.* Warnings, in the name of Religion, against the desire and the effort to accumulate riches, will meet their ears at every

turn; stripped somewhat, it is true, of what might otherwise be their terrifying effects, on account of the evident inattention paid to those warnings, however solemnly uttered. Our pupils will know that no good work can be done by anybody without riches of his own or access to the riches of others. Without their aid the sick could not be cured, nor the hungry fed, nor the naked clothed, nor the houseless sheltered, nor children taught; the widow and fatherless could not be comforted. But these are duties which they know ought to be performed, with others, besides, which require the aid of riches. Where is your proof, they will ask, that the performance of these duties is unacceptable to God? Have you not the sense to perceive that your denunciation of riches is a denunciation of these duties? Do you not believe in His goodness? Our faith in God's goodness is at least strong enough to resist your feeble efforts to shake it.

They will be told that God has sanctioned, and continues to sanction, preparations by one nation to inflict injuries upon other nations; slaughter, plunder, destruction, and ill-usage worse than these, being their purpose, and part of the inducement with many to enlist in them. Where is the proof, they will ask, which warrants your daring to affirm that God can take delight in seeing men inflict misery upon one another? You have no faith in His goodness, but happily for us you are impotent to shake ours.

They will hear pestilence and famine described as manifestations of God's wrath. They will recognize them as awful calamities. They will know that in proportion as knowledge and the wise use of it have gained ground, these calamities have become less severe and less frequent. They will be capable of anticipating their progressive disappearance before the further spread of knowledge and good conduct. And they will say to these monsters in human shape—the offspring of irreligion and ignorance—where is the proof on which you presume to tarnish the attributes of the Almighty with one of the vilest weaknesses of an ill-conditioned man?

They will hear men who live very comfortably under the protection of Government, with its police and army, objecting to pay in the shape of taxes for the protection which they enjoy, on account of their religious scruples—because it is unlawful to resist evil, or to remunerate others who incur hardship and risk their lives to guard society from evil. Our pupils will know that the prevalence of a respect for property is essential to a high state of well-being, and that protection is necessary to guard the majority who feel this respect against the small number who do not. And they will ask, where is the proof that arrangements for affording this protection can be displeasing to God? Is it impiety, or stupidity, or a combination of both concealed in cant and hypocrisy, which prevents your perceiving that to impute to the Almighty a disapproval of the efforts of mankind to secure their own well-being by organizing protection to life and property, is to deny His goodness?

They will be assailed with attempts to terrify them into the belief that a state of excruciating and never-ending torment is in store for them after death, that escape from it is reserved for few, and how to be included among these few is difficult to be ascertained. For it is represented that some are to incur this dreadful fate by departing from the religion of their fathers, some by refusing to depart from it, and some because they cannot help doubting what appears to them incredible and disbelieving what is palpably false. If they could but be imposed upon, they might believe that no length of good service to their fellow-creatures would justify their hopes of escape, while escape might not be altogether impossible after a life of iniquity followed by repentance. To make the absurdity of these appeals to the fears of the weak and superstitious still more glaring, they will be accompanied by assertions that to disregard them is to sap the foundations on which alone expectations of good conduct can be built with safety. Our pupils will ask where is the proof for all this farrago of contradictions? Can the utterers of such atrocities be aware that the God which they worship, and at whose shrine they would make us and



others fall down, is not the "perfection of goodness and wisdom," but a hideous spectre, the creature of their own evil imaginations, whose appetite for human misery they hope to satiate by the ready sacrifice of their neighbours, fawning and flattering all the time to ingratiate themselves, so as to be spared to witness, in the company of their spectre-god, the writhings and agonies of the tortured.

A greater danger than from any of these sources awaits them. They will see men rolling in wealth, revelling in luxury, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of finery and show, while swarms of children are suffered to grow up into paupers and criminals from the mere want of some of that wealth thus profusely consumed, a judicious application of which would secure for these neglected and ill-used children a probable future of happiness and respectability. They will see rich men living in this way, models of propriety and decorum, regular at public worship, making long faces, and offering long prayers, and deprecating with up-turned eyes every attempt to extend education to all children unalloyed with the condition of their being ruthlessly subjected to unintelligible and therefore repulsive or damaging Bible-lessons; and deluding themselves and others into the belief that they are religious men. Our pupils will ask, where is the proof that men like these deserve to be called religious? Who is a religious man? Must he not obey the will of God? Does not God will that men shall so conduct themselves towards one another as to promote the general well-being? Can men know what kind of conduct will best do this, if uninstructed? Can men be formed to practise this conduct, at all events to abstain from conduct destructive of well-being, so regularly and instinctively as that the wish to act otherwise shall not occur to them if, while children, they be left untrained? And is there any hope of seeing men thus instructed and disposed, if they be uncared for as children? Out upon you, they will exclaim; go and perform these very obvious duties so long neglected towards children, and then we may consider you religious, without your claiming to be so called.

*P.* As I think we are now beginning to understand one another, I will try to put together the heads of what we conceive to be the course of education best adapted to form good and religious men. We acknowledge that the work ought to begin with life, and yet we would not think of making religious babes-at-the-breast, nor talk of God to lisping infants. Nevertheless, if adults do their duty, a loving and loveable world may be made to dawn upon childhood. This is the only reliable foundation on which to build a superstructure of religion. More properly, this is the kind of soil in which alone religion will grow and flourish. Thoughts of loving and being loved, of giving and receiving pleasure, of benefiting and being benefited, of abstaining from infraction of others' enjoyments and feeling one's own to be respected, of assisting to prevent and resist evil from whatever source arising, with the conviction that others are equally anxious to guard us: this, with the instruction to show children how to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong; how to do good and how to avoid doing mischief: by such treatment will children be prepared to form a just appreciation of the Divine attributes, and to be filled with love and reverence for the perfection of goodness and wisdom. By such treatment will children be prepared to see through the impious counterfeits attempted to be passed off in the world as religion, and to resist contamination from the evil influences by which they will continue to be surrounded till mankind has learned to throw off the superstitions and atrocities represented as religious, the inheritance from ages of barbarism.

*T.* We see nothing to object to in this summary. To attain to perfection in carrying out such a course of education is more than we dare hope for; but by aiming at it we shall approach to it nearer and nearer, while, by not aiming at it, education would seem to be almost without purpose.

*P.* On so vital a subject, on so religious a duty as education, we cannot be too cautious. A theory of education, let it appear ever so complete, ever so harmonious in all its parts, cannot

be unhesitatingly accepted till it has been put to the test of repeated trials. Human sagacity seems unequal to form a system free from imperfections till its defects of omission and arrangement have been forced upon the notice by shortcomings, by failures, and by damages sustained in the place of benefits received. We ought even to turn to account the objections urged upon us by those who are virulently and captiously opposed to everything new. In their indiscriminating hostility they might stumble upon a real defect, want of attention to which would mar the beauty of our work, and make it less acceptable. We ought not, therefore, to lose sight of those objections which seem to have ruffled you ; and we may as well, before we separate, ask ourselves whether our proposed course of instruction can tend to make boys or men disputatious.

*T.* "Disputatious" is one of those ugly words which convey disapprobation of a mode of dealing with propositions and assertions, sometimes desirable and sometimes not, without indicating when it is and when it is not desirable.

*P.* Ought not people who are addicted to the ugly use of ugly words to be driven to the necessity of justifying their use of them, or of retracting them ? Are we not entitled to ask, for instance, if a man who is known to dispute a doctrine or many doctrines deserves the epithet "disputatious," whether the doctrines which he disputes be true or false, or where he himself is convinced, rightly or wrongly, of the validity of his own doubts and objections ?

*T.* They would answer only when he disputes the true, or when he is not convinced by his own objections.

*P.* And ought he to resist having any doctrine imposed upon him till he has had an opportunity of examining whether it be true or false ?

*T.* We should say that he ought. But you know how prevalent the practice is of trying to impose doctrines upon others, especially upon the young ; and how great the irritation is when doctrines which have been accepted without exami-

nation, and for which the justification is not at hand, are questioned.

*P.* Which conduces most to the love of truth—the acceptance of doctrines before examination, or after their truth has been ascertained by examination?

*T.* As to that, there is no difference of opinion between us.

*P.* Are we not entitled to ask, then, whether it be to serve the cause of truth and improvement to deter from the examination of doctrines before accepting them, or to discourage a determined rejection of them when found to be untenable, by pronouncing those who are thus disposed to be disputatious?

*T.* These considerations, we should think, must find favour at last with all who have control over education, and lead them, first, to allow the young freedom of examination, and afterwards, to encourage them in the exercise of it. The command which adults have over the circumstances surrounding the young, judiciously used, will suffice to keep away from them what might operate hurtfully, or interrupt their progress.

*P.* As regards making children sceptical or irreverent, we may ask, ought children to doubt nothing, and revere everything?

*T.* The moment an opportunity is given for putting such questions, and obtaining attention to them, misunderstanding must vanish. Children, and men too, ought to doubt what has not been satisfactorily explained to them, and they ought not to revere what is false, bad, foolish, and contradictory. In fact, their reverence in that direction must be incompatible with reverence for truth, goodness, and wisdom.

*P.* In the shower of epithets with which your objectors hoped to flood and sweep away your teachings, there were some others not unlikely to have more weight, if thought to be deserved, than the very serious ones which we have examined. A cold, hard, calculating man, would be generally understood to be one disinclined to share his crust with a starving fellow-creature, or to forego superfluities for the sake of placing necessities within reach of the destitute, or to hazard life to

rescue another from impending destruction, or to become surety or bail to advance a friend or extricate him from difficulty. Does our teaching, think you, tend to form such unamiable and despicable characters ?

*T.* The imputation could not be hazarded by anybody who had the slightest notion of what is uppermost in our thoughts and what we are striving to impress upon our children. We will not venture to say that we expect the men who shall have been educated in our schools to prove more courageous, daring, and generous than their countrymen, although we don't know why they should prove less so. But upon the duties owed by the successful and well-to-do in the world towards the unsuccessful and suffering, we shall be disappointed if our calculating children do not prove a few degrees in advance of others to whom our descriptions of lessons are unknown.

In the first place, we aspire so to teach and train, as that a much smaller proportion than usual of our children shall fall into the destitute class—shall find it necessary to put forth any appeal for assistance from the well-to-do. Next, gradually as our children form distinct and vivid conceptions of the conditions of industrial success, and feel that they are acquiring the habits and capacity which will enable them to comply with these conditions, we are most careful to omit no effort to secure their imbibing a sense of the duties attached to the possession of superabundant wealth, as well as of the enjoyment which they may derive from it. When the attention of boys is called to the fact that superabundance of wealth comes to the possession of comparatively few, and that it is difficult to prognosticate which of them will be among those few ; and an appeal is made to them to explain in what way it will be most for the general happiness that they should be resolving, while young, to employ their superabundance, if it should be allotted to them,—we have never missed eliciting from our children, in tones expressive of deep feelings and strong conviction, that to spend wealth upon tawdry finery, vain display, and luxurious indulgence, while there is suffering left unmitigated, and ignorance left

uninstructed from the want of it, would evince a baseness and callousness of feeling which they will strive with all their might to prevent being ever chargeable against them.

*P.* This reply of yours will touch a sympathetic chord in the breasts of some of those who are only suspicious of you because they have never thought of the great omission in education which we are endeavouring to supply. We need not fear that any loss will be sustained by the world when the present generation of warm, impulsive, soft, generous-minded Christian-like rich men, is replaced by the cold, hard, calculating men formed out of the children reared in your schools.

## ON TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE.



*T.* It will not surprise you to learn from us that we have not yet been able to relieve ourselves from all our doubts, hesitations, and anxieties, acted upon as we must be, in common with others, by the turmoil of conflicting opinions and by our experience of the different kinds of conduct to which varieties of opinion necessarily lead. Ought we to think the worse of people with whom we differ in opinion? Ought we to make distinctions in our conduct between them and others with whom we agree? More than this, can we control our inclinations to make such distinctions? And if not, might our inclinations have been different had our early education been better conducted? and how may it be hoped to bring about the desirable state of feeling in this respect in the young, whose understandings and opinions it is our business to form? We confess to you our inability to see our way to a satisfactory solution of these questions.

*P.* You feel that if every difference of opinion were to be productive of coolness, dislike, estrangement, or bitterness, social intercourse would be sadly interrupted.

*T.* The larger part of the benefit and all the pleasure derivable from it would be destroyed.

*P.* You also feel that you cannot be indifferent to the opinions which you hold and which others hold, especially upon subjects where errors of judgment might lead to deplorable conduct. Nor could you be unmoved when observing in your friends symptoms of indifference to the opinions which

they professed on matters universally considered to be most important.

*T.* A general indifference as to the truth or falseness of convictions, or, which amounts to the same thing, a disinclination to take pains for the purpose of ascertaining the true and false in important statements of fact, and the right and wrong in lines of conduct, would not be a commendable trait of national character, nor be likely to contribute to the improvement as well as to the pleasure which we look for from social intercourse. We would certainly not desire to form our society and connections out of men of this stamp.

*P.* Would you prefer earnest men who deviate from the beaten track in their opinions—perhaps from your opinions, which you hold only because you are convinced of their soundness, to the men who glide listlessly down the current of opinion, taking up as they go along with the prevailing truths and errors of the day?

*T.* Our leaning would be towards the earnest and truthful, though, as we might think, mistaken men.

*P.* Whose word would you be more disposed to trust? Whose evidence, as far as that evidence was meant to convey the actual thoughts of the witness, would carry the greater weight with you?

*T.* The scrupulously conscientious man, again, would have our ear and our confidence.

*P.* Whose advice would you take? By whose counsel would you prefer to guide your own conduct?

*T.* We should prefer to guide our conduct by our own counsel; but when driven to claim the assistance of others, we seek to know something more about them than their truthfulness and zeal for enlightenment, invaluable as those qualities are. We should ask for proofs of their experience, their attainments, their capacity. The character which they enjoy for all these qualifications might attract us in the first instance. Many of our movements in life are determined through the estimate already made by others of the qualifications of those



among whom we are compelled to seek that guidance which, unaided, we feel incapable of supplying to ourselves.

*P.* Incapacity, or any other cause of misjudgment in others, would lead you to fear that your conduct might be wrong if determined by them; but your want of confidence would not be caused by their want of conscientiousness.

*T.* Their incapacity alone would prevent our accepting their advice. Our respect for their conscientiousness would make us regret that so high a recommendation was not associated with the other recommendations which might admit of our profiting by it.

*P.* As you might not be able to shape your course by the advice of a man merely because he was truthful, might you also be unable to approve his conduct?

*T.* We might.

*P.* Might you find yourselves driven to condemn it very severely?

*T.* Having to do with the children of many ignorant, though truthful and well-intentioned parents, we are frequently asked to flog children for faults committed at home. We refuse, of course, and explain why we refuse. If not at first, after a time, most of the parents come over to our views. They see how well discipline is maintained in our schools without violence, by the force of example, and by occasional appeals to intelligence and good-feeling. But it has happened that some unfortunate little fellow has not been let off at home. A father who thinks himself religious justifies his resort to violence with "Spare the rod, spoil the child;" or excuses the pain which he inflicts upon himself as well as his child, by "I could have overlooked any other fault, but I cannot suffer my child to grow up a liar," unconscious that mis-treatment had first made the child a coward, and that dread of further ill-treatment might deaden all truthfulness in him.

*P.* Other resources for the protection of children failing, would you not deprive parents of the liberty of so misusing their power?

*T.* It is more easy to forbid parents to act harshly and unwisely by their children than to prevent them. Unless domestic or school punishment be administered with extreme severity or be followed by dangerous consequences, magisterial or judicial interference, it is thought, might make the position of children worse than before. Midas, on the bench, if appealed to, will sometimes screen the culprit, and even refer with complacency to the benefit which he was sensible of having derived from similar castigation. We know of no other effectual means of protecting children against harsh and injudicious treatment at the hands of parents and teachers than the diffusion of wiser thoughts upon the subject of education, backed by the influence of the example of those who are effecting all that is wanted for children by milder and wiser methods.

*P.* If death or other irreparable damage were to ensue from severity of treatment, would the legal authorities be sure to take cognizance of it?

*T.* Unquestionably; and punishment would follow. The party against whom the maltreatment was proved might be adjudged guilty of homicide, perhaps even of murder.

*P.* When you and I talk of bad acts we are of one mind; we mean acts unfavourable to well-being. Among these are some so generally admitted to be destructive, and so really destructive to well-being, as to be forbidden by law—to constitute crimes. There are other acts, also, greatly disapproved as unfavourable to well-being, but for the repression of which it is not thought desirable to resort to the powers of law. Moreover, in thinking of these various acts, it is impossible not to be reminded of the many acts now considered harmless or even praiseworthy which were formerly condemned as criminal; and of some acts formerly encouraged by the legislature, and committed by men held to be respectable, which are now forbidden as crimes. Let us have a few examples of each, if only to make sure that we shall afterwards be judging of the same class of acts.

*T.* Murders, burglaries, thefts, forgeries, and embezzle-

ments, may be taken as samples of acts destructive of well-being and forbidden as crimes, not only at this time and in this country, but in former times and other countries, with any pretensions to civilization.

Carelessness, recklessness, inattention in the discharge of duties, whether those self-imposed or those which attach to every member of society, cowardice or sluggishness in holding back from interference to save others from danger or calamity : these are examples of conduct which, in various degrees, bring down upon those guilty of them censure and disapprobation from society. But the legislature, fearing more harm than good from attempts at their prevention by law, has mostly abstained from constituting them crimes. Other penalties are attached to these acts so well known that we need do no more than just advert to them.

As instances of acts formerly held to be criminal or illegal, but illegal no longer, may be mentioned the avowal of opinions and convictions at variance with an established formula, the acceptance of more than five per cent. interest on loans of capital or money, the exportation of long wool and machinery, and the importation of India and China produce from any port on this side of the Cape of Good Hope and of Cape Horn, or in foreign vessels.

And as instances of acts now made criminal or discountenanced as unjustifiable and disgraceful, but formerly considered respectable, may be mentioned capturing and holding slaves, privateering, impressing, and duelling.

*P.* When society has resolved that certain acts, which it holds to be detrimental to well-being, must not be permitted, ought it to suspend its resolution in favour of individuals who plead, as a justification for committing them, conscience, or the will of God as interpreted by themselves, or any form of excuse grounded upon religion ?

*T.* To do this would be tantamount to the suspension or abrogation of all law, so great would be the number of crimes committed for conscience sake, or in obedience to the Lord's

will, real or pretended, and the number of refusals to perform acts of social duty, on the plea of scruples of conscience, or of reluctance to offend the Majesty of Heaven?

*P.* Are you not exaggerating? Is it not recognized between us as a truth proved, or too plain to need proof, that a prevalence of respect for property and of reverence for law and order is, and must be, the foundation and support of the laws themselves? How, then, where such a prevalence is to be found, could the suspension of law be followed by the widespread ill-conduct pointed to by you?

*T.* We should say that respect for property and reverence for law and order prevailed widely, if ninety-five out of every hundred individuals were animated by these feelings. But to give licence to the remaining five would go far to destroy the well-being of the whole hundred. We are not aware that any plea can be admitted in justification for the intentional commission of acts pronounced to be criminal—that is, considered to be inconsistent with the welfare of society.

*P.* Do you also think that society in former days ought to have admitted no pleas in justification of the acts then considered criminal, but which have since been pronounced to be harmless or creditable?

*T.* If we can point out how any former age could have separated its criminal acts into those really destructive of well-being and those erroneously thought to be so, our opinion is, not that pleas in justification of the latter acts ought to have been admitted, but that such pleas ought to have been unnecessary, since the acts should not have been classed among crimes. But if we cannot point out how unenlightened and misdirected men can separate one class of what they consider crimes from another—the real from the imaginary—we do not see how pleas in justification of acts pronounced criminal, rightly or wrongly, can be admitted. Their admission would be a virtual abandonment of law.

*P.* Does not the systematic refusal to admit such pleas seem to close some of the openings through which we might



husband's punishment, turned to the man and asked if he was willing to promise not to repeat his offence, intimating an intention to discharge him on his own recognizances to keep the peace towards his wife. The magistrate's humane intentions were frustrated, for the man refused to make the promise demanded of him, exclaiming, "Which am I to obey, the law of God or the law of man?" No resource was left to the magistrate but to sentence the man to imprisonment.\*

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\* The following is extracted from *The Times* newspaper of 25th July, 1861 :—

"MIDLAND CIRCUIT.—LINCOLN, JULY 24.

"(Before Mr. Justice WILLES and a Special Jury.)

"SIMPSON V. HALL.

"Mr. Macaulay, Q.C., Mr. Flowers, and Mr. Cave, appeared for the plaintiff. The defendant conducted his case in person.

"This was an action for libel published, and slanderous words spoken of the plaintiff by the defendant.

"The plaintiff is a clergyman, the incumbent of the chapel of Langrich and Thornton. The defendant is a hawker of tea and of tracts, a teacher and a preacher, and, as the learned counsel stated in his opening address, orderly, industrious, and respectable, with the exception of the uttering and publishing the slanders in question, which seemed to be founded on some strange delusion, as he must term it, although he desired to exercise the utmost forbearance towards the defendant in stating the case. It appeared that the defendant had some time previous to the spring of 1860 gone to various persons in Langrich, stating that a poor Wesleyan dressmaker who lived with her mother and received 2s. 6d. for weekly relief from the parish, was in the family-way by the plaintiff. He stated this to the board of guardians, who in consequence discontinued the relief; and subsequently stated that she had actually been delivered of a male child. A surgeon who had attended her on account of weakness under which she was labouring visited her for the purpose of ascertaining whether it were so, and was satisfied that she neither was in the family-way nor ever had been. He met the defendant and told him so. The defendant, however, persisted in it that she had had a male child, and went to the Willertons', where he insisted to both mother and daughter, that she had been delivered, and that Mr. Simpson was the father. These statements were mentioned to the plaintiff by a parishioner as having been said by a man who was evidently crazed, and of whose words no notice need be taken, but the plaintiff's brother hearing of the matter, wrote to the defendant asking what he meant by making such statements of his brother. The defendant replied that he did so because they were true. In consequence of this a meeting was held of the parishioners, at which an unanimous vote was passed reprobating the defendant's conduct. Thereupon the defendant wrote the letter containing the alleged libel, which referred to the same charge, and imputed to the plaintiff that he was not fit to exercise the office of a

When suicides have been committed under the so-called religious persuasion that early access to heaven would be obtained thereby, although the victims are beyond the reach of human censure, the tones of it are heard plainly enough by survivors. Parents, under similar delusions, have been known to destroy their children; but the plea of insanity, not of religion, is alone capable of saving those who have committed the act from capital punishment.

*P.* Do you remember what attention was paid to the religious justification put forward by certain zealots who entered a place of worship of a Mormon congregation, and disturbed them in their devotions?

*T.* We well remember: none at all. Although the magistrate had no liking for the Latter-day Saints, he did not the less protect them in the enjoyment of their legal rights, and punish those who, in the name of religion, invaded the rights of others.

*P.* Another class of religious enthusiasts will now and then exhibit themselves to the public gaze, and challenge the interference of the police, by obstructing the highway in their attempts to preach what they call the Gospel. How does the magistrate treat their defence?

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minister. The present action was consequently brought, and the plea which the defendant pleaded will sufficiently show with what sort of mind he had uttered these imputations. It was in these words:—

“The defendant in his own proper person for a plea to the whole declaration says he is firmly convinced that it has been revealed to him by the Lord that the charges made against the plaintiff, as in the declaration alleged, are all true, and that the defendant spoke and wrote under the influence of that conviction, and not from malice.”

“This plea was withdrawn on a suggestion by the Lord Chief Justice Cockburn that it was not issuable, and a plea of ‘Not Guilty,’ and of the truth of the libel, entered.

“The evidence of the plaintiff, of Charlotte Willerton, of the mother, and of the surgeon, entirely and completely negated any improper connexion and the fact that Willerton had ever had a child.

“The defendant was over and over again reminded by the learned judge of the groundlessness of the charges, and desired to consider whether he would not before verdict retract his statements and apologize. He seemed to labour still under an hallucination, and said he could not, although he declined to address the jury or call any witnesses.

“The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, with 100*l.* damages.”

*T.* A determination to preserve the peace, and the unobstructed right of way, is generally to be observed, combined with pity for the insensate though well-meant over-stepping of the law brought to his notice. The law of the land is the expressed will of society, and not at variance, it may be presumed, with the generally received interpretation of religion for the time being. The man who objects to the law, and dissents from the soundness of the religious interpretation, is not permitted to disobey as well as to dissent. He need not accept the office of magistrate or administrator of the law, or having accepted without due consideration, he may resign. But if he accept, and so long as he holds the office, he must administer the law as it is made for him.

*P.* Is obedience to the laws always insisted upon, whether those laws be good or bad, religious or irreligious; and that, too, in the face of the numerous and remarkable repeals and revisions which we have witnessed?

*T.* Obedience is always insisted upon, except where laws, instead of being altered in conformity with public opinion, are suffered to remain unexecuted, and become obsolete. So far as we can see, there is only one satisfactory mode of relief from bad or irreligious laws—their repeal or rectification. Laws unrepealed are not to be resisted by individuals, who may form their opinions, hold their opinions, and change their opinions, in opposition to the opinions of society, but must not act in opposition to its will.

*P.* Were there conflicts of religious opinion in the days when the right of succession to the throne was disputed? and in what sense has the right of succession been decided?

*T.* The "Divine right of kings," to adopt the religious slang of past times, has been made to yield. The affections of the people are now held to be the basis of sovereign power, and the guarantee of its continuance. If the fact of the affections of the people, or the endurance of the people, while their affections, not yet estranged, are being undermined, be not a sufficient guarantee that the Sovereign reigns by the will of



God, an attempt at rebellion in the name of God, in opposition to the sovereign power, backed by those affections, or by a determination to endure, rather than to change, would be successfully resisted, unless the pretended will of God were combined with real superiority of force brought to bear from foreign parts.

*P.* We have already glanced at the conduct of the Quakers, whose wish it seems to be to set up religious scruples in opposition to the will of society as embodied in law. What do you say to the social phenomenon which they present to us for examination?

*T.* Their mode of asserting principle is rather adapted to excite our laughter than any deeper feeling. Lacking the intellectual vigour to form principles of conduct which can be acted upon, or the moral courage to stand by the principles which they adopt, they sneak out of difficulties which they will not relinquish, and cannot resist.

*P.* According to you, their so-called principles might be supposed to be a tissue of impracticable rules of conduct, and their career a series of subterfuges to escape from them. But are not you in a dilemma; for could such a sect have survived up to this time?

*T.* Impracticable tenets survive for a time by the aid of subterfuges. Quakers may not be worse than other sects. But their manufactory of principles, like that of the Latter-day Saints, being modern, and not shrouded in the darkness of antiquity, its founders, and the produce of their spiritual looms, have been thoroughly examined by a critical public; and the result has been, first, slow growth, and since, rapid decay.

*P.* In days happily gone by, we read of regicides and others, who were prepared to sacrifice themselves in order that vengeance might overtake those whom the powers of earth protected while sinning, as they thought, against God. How did society deal with them?

*T.* It showed unmistakably that assassination, on the plea of religion, would not be tolerated. The most excruciating

torture that human malignity could devise was inflicted upon the culprit before death was allowed to close his sufferings. Had the religious maniac been confined for life, or even simply put to death as a sacrifice required for the good of society, we should see nothing but another exemplification of the determination of society that no one shall be allowed to set up his reading of the Divine will against their own will as legally declared. Whereas the legal torture resorted to exposes the religious impotence of the torturers in trying to counterpoise the influence of the expectation of eternal happiness on the mind of their victim, by the temporal pain which, while they inflict on the rack, they pronounce from the pulpit to be comparatively insignificant.

*P.* After society has pronounced what conduct it will not permit, or, which is the same thing, what conduct is illegal, and has made plain, in the form of public opinion, what conduct, not forbidden by law, it looks upon with disapprobation, two characters of conduct in opposition to its will are recognizable: one, where the parties who set the wishes of society at defiance do so under the impression that they are acting wrong, although unable at the time to resist the temptation to transgress; the other, where the parties who set the will of society at defiance do so designedly, impelled by a sense of duty not unfrequently derived from their own peculiar notions of religion. Do we find that society shows any disposition to yield to either of these parties?

*T.* We do not. Neither do we see how society could exist unless obedience to its laws was insisted upon.

*P.* While society has been declaring its will, and insisting upon obedience to the expression of it in its laws, has it seen reason, from generation to generation, and from year to year, to discuss and consider many alterations submitted for its adoption, and to remodel both its laws and its opinions, so as almost to throw a halo of glory and sanctification over the victims who had been sacrificed to the maintenance of former laws?

*T.* It has; of that there can be no doubt.

*P.* And is society the worse for having so changed its laws?

*T.* All the better. Many laws which were in force at the beginning of this century would now be considered intolerable by everybody.

*P.* We seem to have come to the admission that conduct conformable to the will of society must be enforced, while it is almost equally important that openings should be made to enable society to alter—to amend its will. We need but turn back a small number of pages in our history to be satisfied that we could ill afford to part even with some of the later changes in the will of society. And I should think that you must be among those who are hopeful of some further changes.

*T.* We rejoice in many of the changes that have been made, and are hopeful of others.

*P.* The question which I now submit for your consideration is: How is society to enforce obedience to its will, and at the same time not to exclude itself from any assistance by which desirable changes in its will may be effected?

*T.* Submission to law being indispensable, the only opening for change must be through persuasion while obeying.

*P.* I do not see that objection can reasonably be taken to an inquiry which springs from so well-chosen a starting-point. Does your idea of persuasion include liberty of discussion and remonstrance in the fullest sense of those terms?

*T.* In the fullest sense of those terms, submission to the laws, so long as they are unchanged, being understood.

*P.* You are aware that people cling to some of their laws with great tenacity, with an ardour of affection not by any means warranted by the goodness of the laws themselves, and that they are ill-prepared to brook remonstrance or any manifestation of a desire for change?

*T.* That people are thus weak we admit. Of course we cannot but think that any inclination to stifle expressions of opinion as to the desirableness of change, or expositions of the

reasons for recommending change, or for urging upon others the expediency of acquiescence in change, would be a proof of insensibility to the danger of depriving society of all access to further improvement—a proof of ignorance and weakness in combination calling urgently for instruction and guidance. There is only one limitation that we can think of as at all desirable, and that can scarcely be called a limitation to the freedom of advocating and discussing new opinions—we mean that which might be imposed upon instigations to refuse obedience to existing laws.

*P.* Forceful expositions of the badness of a law and impassioned appeals for concurrence towards effecting its modification or repeal, may produce great bitterness of feeling, and yet not approach even to the appearance of an instigation to resist its execution. May not great mischief arise from granting licence to the expression of dissent and of desire for change while existing laws are clung to by a considerable portion of society with convulsive tenacity?

*T.* When the intelligent minority, small but growing, of any community is beginning to awaken to the enormity of laws which inflict pains and penalties upon those who dissent from particular religious professions, which impose a state of slavery upon a class, which commit the power of governing and taxing the whole people to persons so circumstanced as to be irresistibly tempted to abuse their power, can we say that this intelligent minority ought to be debarred from using their powers of persuasion to bring the majority over to their views? And if not, and the majority are irritable, indignant, and violent, ought the consequences of their violence to be charged to the intelligent minority who are doing their best to enlighten the ignorance of their countrymen in order to bring about an improvement in the laws? Our only hope of ever being quit of paroxysms of violence is not through the vain attempt to suppress the introduction by the minority of the further light and truth for which there is so much need, but through the awakening and fostering of a desire among the majority to

listen to every new suggestion ; so that when, because it shocks prevailing opinion, favour is not to be expected, toleration may be relied upon.

*P.* If I do not misconstrue your sentiments, they tend to this conclusion. The conduct of individuals must be made so far to conform to the will of society, that nothing shall be done which is held to be hurtful to the general well-being, whether the will of society be conveyed in the form of law or by the manifestation of public opinion. But since experience has shown, over and over again, that society has been mistaken in its views, and has, happily, been induced to change them ; and as there is no reason for supposing that the limits of improvement have been reached, or that the need of rectification has passed away, a desire for freedom of discussion—nay, for more than freedom, for encouragement of discussion—ought to be universally cultivated, in conjunction with obedience to law and deference to public opinion in conduct.

*T.* This seems to us the state of mind most favourable to the present peace and future improvement of society.

*P.* Shall we now endeavour to test the strength with which society may be supposed to hold these opinions, or to cultivate this state of mind by citing instances from former days, when principles and doctrines to which it was deeply attached, have been controverted, and also instances where similar controversies are still proceeding ?

*T.* There ought not to be any objection to have opinions put to whatever test may be required to prove their soundness ; and we hope that the disposition to raise an objection of the kind is rapidly departing from us.

*P.* We may dismiss examples from the past, where sentence has been already pronounced, without much ceremony. Let us be content to cite the discussions which preceded the abolition of the slave-trade and of slavery, Catholic emancipation, the repeal of the test and corporation acts, the reform of parliament, and the removal of restrictions on trade. How were the first attempts to recommend these changes in our laws

received, and what do we think of those changes now that they have been made ?

*T.* They were received with very great ill-feeling, and resisted at every step with the utmost bitterness. We now glory in having made these changes, feel that we are deriving great benefit from them, and would not like to think that we could be led to treat those who might suggest and recommend similar beneficial changes to us, with the intolerance and vindictiveness so profusely showered upon the benefactors, to whose intelligence and devotedness we owe our being now in the enjoyment of the fruits of past changes.

*P.* From past changes of law, let us turn to past changes of opinion. What shall we say to the discussions which preceded revolutions of opinion concerning the shape of the earth, the causes of day and night and of eclipses ; the circulation of the blood, the causes of disease, and the means of preserving health ; the causes of thunder and lightning ; and the best methods of securing good conduct, and of preventing destitution, vice, and crime ?

*T.* However greatly we may feel beholden to the benefactors of mankind with whom these mighty changes—these inestimable contributions to human well-being—originated, we fear it must be admitted that most of them were condemned by their own generation as disturbers of the peace, unsettlors of opinion, uprooters of faith, enemies of religion, infidels, unbelievers, or ill-conditioned men under some epithet, drawn from the armoury of theological vituperations, indicative of the hatred or aversion of those who used it.

*P.* Ought not our knowledge of the errors of our fathers' ways to serve as a caution to us—while we excuse them for their inability to discern what we now see so clearly—not to repeat their mistakes in circumstances similar in principle, although altered in form ?

*T.* Certainly it ought. And there is evidence to justify our thinking that discussions are now conducted with greater consideration and forbearance than they were formerly.

*P.* In order to judge how far the desire for perfect freedom of discussion is cultivated and felt, should we try it in reference to some proposed change which society is more than half inclined to make, or to some change the adoption of which would imply a revolution as great as that which substituted Christianity for Druidism in these islands, or Mahomedanism for Christianity in Asia and Africa.

*T.* The greater the change proposed, the greater of course would be the trial of the love for freedom of discussion, and of the confidence in the fruits to be gathered in from it.

*P.* There are people in this country—I will hazard no conjecture as to their numbers or attainments—who think that theology and good government would both greatly gain by being kept perfectly distinct; or, to use a familiar expression, by the separation of Church and State. Now, suppose some member of our House of Commons, by way of giving expression to his own opinion—and, as he believed, to an opinion, though latent, prevailing much more widely than was generally imagined—were to move a resolution that in future no bishoprics, livings, or benefices, in the gift of the Crown, as they became vacant should be filled up, the revenues liberated thereby to be appropriated to the better education of the people, to a religious duty too long neglected or indifferently performed. How do you think such a resolution would be received?

*T.* We apprehend so ill-judging a member would receive little encouragement to repeat his motion.

*P.* But would he not, and ought he not, if convinced of the truth and soundness of his own views, to persevere as Wilberforce, Brougham, Romilly, Hume, and Cobden persevered; and if so, ought you to be prepared to stigmatise him as ill-judging, and to signify not only that you would oppose him because you could not concur in his opinions, but that you disapproved of his disturbing you in the enjoyment of your own unquestioned?

*T.* You must acknowledge that there is some reason for our being startled by the improbability and boldness of the pro-

posal of any such resolution. On reflection, we admit that any member, however strange his conceptions of duty might appear to us, ought to meet with tolerance, if he do not command our respect, while conscientiously bent upon acting up to them.

*P.* I believe I am warranted in stating that very many thoughtful people reject as utterly false and incompatible with the Divine attributes the doctrine of eternal punishment. Their objection to a future state of never-ending torture commonly supposed to be in store for most of us in "Hell" does not rest upon the difficulty of assigning the place where this torture is to be endured, since it was ejected from the bowels of our own earth, but upon a difficulty which they find quite unsurmountable, because they see no escape from the surrender of Hell or of the goodness of God, and it is impossible for them to hesitate between the two. Ought these people to be stigmatised for holding their opinions, for avowing them, for promulgating them, for defending them?

*T.* Conformably to the conclusions which we have already arrived at, they ought to be approved and encouraged. But would they not create a dreadful turmoil?

*P.* In the same way that we have "religious difficulties" interposed to prevent the education of the people, I suppose we may have "religious turmoils" to silence discussion and smother freedom of thought. While many persons, after deep reflection, have come to the conclusion that a future state of rewards and punishments—that is, a promise of reward and a threat of punishment in a future state of existence—is utterly subversive of all rational conceptions of Divine wisdom and goodness, not only is the uttering these opinions met with widespread disapprobation, but in great emergencies it is attempted to extort from those who hold such opinions an avowal whereon to justify a denial of the protection supposed to be afforded by the law to every member of the community without distinction.

*T.* It is to be hoped that you are referring to some by-gone state of society. Treatment like this would be worse than a



denial of freedom of expression—it would be an attempt to suppress liberty of thought. Or if this were disputed, there could be no concealing the fact, that liberty of thought was only to be enjoyed on condition that they who ventured upon the luxurious indulgence should pay a penalty for arriving at conclusions obnoxious to law-makers, or evade the penalty by treating those who would inflict it as medical men treat children and lunatics.

*P.* If you were not so much absorbed as you are in your school-work, if you had time to notice events of daily occurrence all over the country, you might collect proofs in abundance of justice withheld from men too thoughtful to yield a blind assent to the opinions of others, and too conscientious to pretend to convictions which they do not feel. Burglars, swindlers, and embezzlers, escape because the victims whom they have robbed, or the witnesses on whose evidence their victims rely, cannot reconcile man's posthumous punishment with Divine goodness and wisdom. Could they but relinquish their belief in the latter, and imbibe, or pretend to have imbibed, a belief in the former, they would conciliate magisterial and judicial favour and protection.

*T.* We would fain hope that these evidences of magisterial and judicial blindness, lamentable as they are, are but the flickering reflections of the ignorance of former days, drawn forth from obsolete laws by interpreters better judges of the parchment on which they are engrossed, than of the spirit which ought to preside over their administration.

*P.* We must not omit to ask this question: Can a society which sanctions such practices, whether they be conformable to law or in defiance of it, be said to be impressed with the importance and the duty of doing all in its power to encourage freedom of expression as well as freedom of opinion?

*T.* A society which permits such proceedings has much to do before it can be entitled to claim for itself the character of a high regard for truthfulness. We can, however, readily understand the state of mind which persuades itself into the

conviction that a belief in a state of future rewards and punishments is a security for the truthfulness of witnesses.

*P.* And how do they who trust to the influence of this belief as a security for truthfulness certify to themselves that the profession of belief is accompanied by belief?

*T.* That appears to us to be the insuperable difficulty in the way of placing confidence in professions of belief.

*P.* Is there not also some difficulty in ascertaining whether the belief in a state of future rewards and punishments is favourable or otherwise to good conduct?

*T.* Hardly, as far as truthfulness is concerned.

*P.* How happens it, then, that the verdicts of juries can so often be more readily anticipated where questions of religion are involved, from a knowledge of the men in the box, all sworn to truthfulness, than from a knowledge of the merits of the case to be tried? Is there not reason to suspect that they who fancy they place reliance upon this state of belief in witnesses shut their eyes, or, more properly, are blinded to the fact that the avowal of a belief in posthumous rewards and punishments has been perfectly reconcilable with a propensity to perpetrate every conceivable act of malversation, profligacy, and peculation, legislative, magisterial, legal, judicial, and clerical, from which is by no means to be excluded the episcopal? Have the threats of Divine wrath, as dealt out from the mouths of divines, been always awarded according as men have deviated from truth and integrity, and from a proper sense of duty towards their fellow-creatures, more particularly towards defenceless children?

*T.* We pray that these reflections may ere long penetrate the minds of men clothed in ermine and purple, and in sacerdotal garments, white and black, thence to be diffused through all ranks of society.

*P.* Meanwhile the best hopes of society rest upon you. Tell me, if you were judges presiding in court, would you not be anxious to form as correct an opinion as possible of the trustworthiness of every witness who gave evidence before you?

and would you shut out any light that the diligence and acuteness of the counsel and attorneys could bring to bear upon a matter so all-important?

T. We should be sorry to omit availing ourselves of anything that could assist our judgments in estimating the evidences of every witness at its proper value. The film having been removed from our eyes, thanks to you, we are now able to see how dreadfully the sanction of the Divine government is misrepresented; how, under the names of "vengeance" and "eternal punishment," it is perverted to the most base and malignant purposes. We can no longer place any reliance upon belief in posthumous punishment as a security for truthfulness or any other species of good conduct. But even if we could continue to lean upon it, would a dishonest witness hesitate to turn our "foolish faith" against us? Would he not avow a belief which he did not feel, and laugh at our simplicity? More ignorant, from the peculiarity of our position, as judges of the characters of adults who come casually before us, than we are, in our capacity of schoolmasters, of the characters of the boys who are regularly with us, we dare not venture to speak with confidence as to what course is best adapted to guard against the untruthfulness of witnesses on all occasions. In spite of the absurd and culpable practices still persisted in, the main reliance for the truthfulness of a witness in our courts of law is, we conceive, the probability and consistency of his evidence, his bearing while giving it, the test of cross-examination, the absence or failure of any attempts by the adverse party to discredit his testimony, and lastly, the influence over his mind of the legal penalty which awaits the crime of perjury.

P. To which you are no longer disposed to add the fear of posthumous punishment?

T. Experience has shown the legislator that he cannot rely upon this fear to restrain bishops, those shining lights of Christianity, from making an irreligious use of their patronage, nor from imitating and abetting the "Dives class" in a course

of profuse and luxurious living, while multitudes of little children are pining from want of the bread of life in the midst of spiritual destitution. How, then, can he rely upon the beneficial influence of this fear over the minds of individuals of whose Christian training he can have little or no knowledge?

*P.* Does a judge who, while he attaches weight to an avowal of belief in a state of future rewards and punishments, is not quite devoid of intelligence, dispense with the securities for truthfulness which you have mentioned?

*T.* No. And if he were driven to surrender one set of his securities, the secular or the so-called religious, he would not hesitate to retain the former on which to rely exclusively.

*P.* What was passing through your minds when you alluded to the disadvantage of your supposed position as judges in regard to the character of men, compared with your actual position as schoolmasters in regard to the character of boys?

*T.* As schoolmasters we have a full and prolonged view of the lives of our pupils by which to judge of them. Judges have but a one-sided and fleeting view, for a few minutes only, with such intensity of light as skill can throw upon it. And as conduct mainly flows from habits, a familiar acquaintance with habits is the best conceivable help for judging of character. If this be undisputed, attention to the formation of habits—particularly of the habit of reflecting upon the probable and certain consequences of conduct—must be the chief reliance for inducing conduct favourable to well-being.

*P.* And do you not think that belief in a state of future rewards and punishments, to be determined by conduct on earth, must operate most favourably upon the probable future conduct of your pupils? Is it not desirable that, among other consequences of bad conduct, posthumous punishments should be pressed upon their consideration?

*T.* One would think you were now contending that the influence for good over people's minds of hopes and fears concerning a future state of existence was indispensable, having

previously cautioned us that many good and intelligent men were unable to reconcile such a future state of existence with Divine goodness. Might not some of our pupils share in the religious views of these good and intelligent men? As it appears to us, the question which we have to decide is not whether the influence of future rewards and punishments is to be abandoned, but whether it is to be relied upon—whether the belief in it is sure to arise, and, if so, not only in appearance, but in reality—whether it is sure to act in furtherance of what society pronounces to be right conduct, and of the progressive rectification of society's misjudgments concerning conduct. Legislators, while they cling to the practice of invoking the co-operation of posthumous terrors, of attaching a stigma to those who are not under their influence, of encouraging the profession of a belief in their influence which is not felt, show their mistrust by visiting upon perjury every penalty that they think likely to prevent it, just as if there were no belief in posthumous punishment. We may profit by their example.

*P.* I think I gather from your answers that you cannot discover how any additional security is to be obtained for arriving at truth in courts of law, by attempting to repress freedom of thought, by attaching disgrace or disability to the avowal of opinions at variance with those generally accepted, or by holding out temptations for the profession of opinions, not according as they are felt to be true, but according as they are supposed to find favour?

*T.* We certainly think that the practice of rejecting evidence because the witness holds obnoxious opinions, is to impede rather than to promote justice, to impede rather than to promote truthfulness, and to impede rather than to promote knowledge, by encouraging the withholding of speculations leading to new discoveries, and of errors the publication of which is the first step towards their rectification.

*P.* If we have omitted nothing that ought materially to affect our judgment, the conclusion to which we arrive is, that restrictions to make individual conduct conform to prevailing notions of

what promotes well-being cannot be dispensed with, whereas no restriction should be imposed upon freedom of thought and expression, and that it should be sought to influence opinion in no other way than by instruction. Tolerance of opinion and expression is, in fact, quite as indispensable for the progress of society as intolerance of conduct is to its conservation.

*T.* Not forgetting what we have already agreed to, that different degrees of intolerance, tolerance, and approval ought to be apportioned to different kinds of conduct.

*P.* Let us now endeavour to form some estimate of the probable influence of views such as we have taken upon the tone and discipline of your schools. Do you think it would be desirable to encourage a tolerant spirit in regard to opinions and the avowal of them among schoolboys?

*T.* Most desirable. It is unnecessary to repeat that we ought to omit no effort in order to become acquainted with the state of mind—the trains of thought in our boys. We should rejoice to know these trains to be what we approved and desired, for their sakes. If we found them tinged with error, and likely to lead to bad consequences, our knowledge of them might enable us to take judicious measures for their rectification; whereas our ignorance of them would prevent our doing so. The success of our efforts to raise up in our boys a love of truth and a desire to seek for knowledge, which is truth, ought to put us at our ease as to the wisdom of cultivating in them candour of expression and tolerance for the expressions of others. At all events, we can think of no better course.

*P.* Your course, as you explain it, aims at securing candour and openness from your pupils in their intercourse with yourselves. You, as their physicians, would do nothing to lead them to conceal from you their ailments, lest you should be shut out from the opportunity of administering appropriate remedies. But in their intercourse with one another, might it not be said that unlimited tolerance of ex-

pression would be apt to degenerate into indifference to the use of coarse, obscene, and blasphemous language?

*T.* Such language, unfortunately too common among school-boys, even in the playgrounds of the sons of the wealthy, takes its rise from a fouler source—one far removed from habits of freedom and candour in giving utterance to inward thoughts. It arises from corruption within. Well-disposed boys would avoid companionship with others addicted to the use of such language, and would feel with us that, in shunning them, they were guilty of no intolerance of freedom of thought and of expression, but were simply marking their abhorrence of offensive utterances seldom disjoined from other manifestations of conduct which ought to be considered disreputable.

*P.* Few reasonable parents would, I think, fail to be satisfied with the distinction which you have drawn. Thoughtless or wilful people can alone confound errors of judgment and the avowals of them with the delusions and ravings of madmen, or with the nastiness and slang of the depraved. Schools are for the first, asylums for the second, and reformatories for the third. We need not waste our time upon people who are capable of classing heretics and unbelievers with thieves and murderers. Granting, then, that your pupils will, by your care, rise to the capacity of cultivating in themselves feelings of tolerance for those of their school-fellows who form and express erroneous opinions, while they turn with disgust from utterances indicative of depravity of disposition, do you not think that some pains ought to be taken to prevent the intolerance which it is desirable should be felt for some kinds of conduct, from extending itself to other kinds of conduct which ought to be tolerated or even honoured? Is there no call for guarding against censoriousness of disposition, and the growth of feelings of dislike and antipathy undeserved by the objects of them, and destructive of the kindness and amiability which we all desire to see prevailing around us?

*T.* You are putting us on our trial to ascertain how far we

have digested and assimilated all your teachings. If we are not mistaken, the pervading thought with us in education is to lead children first to inquire and learn how to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad conduct, and then to co-operate with us in bending their wills and forming their dispositions to act in accordance with the dictates of their own judgments. Contemporaneously with instruction and discipline thus directed, feelings of intolerance, tolerance, and affection will attach themselves to others according as their various modes of conduct deserve to be classed as bad, indifferent, or good.

P. And is it not particularly desirable that the young should be brought to cultivate tolerance in regard to all those pursuits, bearings, manners, and tastes of individuals which cannot be shown to infringe upon the liberty of others, however eccentric or at variance with those generally prevalent they may appear to us ?

T. Certainly. And again we say, we know no better method of preparing the young to respect the individuality of others and to claim the undisturbed enjoyment of their own, than to accustom them to apportion, not merely their praise and blame, but their sympathy and antipathy, according as they see good or bad predominating in conduct. Tolerance and respect for individual liberty could scarcely fail to be the feelings inspired by all the more numerous acts of life which neither deserve marks of affection and approbation on the one hand, nor of aversion and disapprobation on the other. Would that we, while striving to perform our duties to the young, could avoid that extreme of intolerance which tries to fix upon us the stigma of "unbelief" !



## ON BELIEF, MISBELIEF, DISBELIEF, AND UNBELIEF.

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*P.* I am concerned to see that you are still so much disturbed by the fear of being pointed at as unbelievers. If ignorant, superstitious, low-minded, base, or unmannered persons will throw out unintelligible, though meant to be damaging, imputations against us, should we on that account be prepared to part with any of those acquirements which are really the causes of our being obnoxious to the dislikes and reproaches of others who have them not? In the low state of civilization to which only men have as yet attained, the capacity of examining questions of morals and religion impartially and dispassionately is enjoyed by few. And to be able to form a just appreciation of the attributes of the Almighty; not to be committed to and bewildered by a mass of contradictions, to many of which habit renders man insensible, and from the whole of which relief, if obtainable at all, is only to be expected in the distant future; to be free from debasing fears and superstitions; to know a test of conduct by which to estimate the characters of men and nations, and to be above the mere animal propensity of fawning upon or snarling at others, according as they favour or thwart our plans and wishes—are not these luxuries for which we ought to endure some little inconvenience without repining?

*T.* We should be sorry to part with any of our acquirements. But it is hard that we may not be permitted to enjoy them in peace.

*P.* Like other men, you would have your enjoyments, if possible, free from alloy. But enjoyments unalloyed are not placed within our reach. The most that we can hope for is to reduce the quantity of alloy to its smallest proportions. At present you are in this state. You prefer to keep your acquirements, although they expose you to annoyances from fools and knaves, rather than be saved from persecution by abandoning your acquirements. Are you quite sure, however, that much of your agitation and uneasiness does not arise from exaggerated fears of the damage to which you are exposed?

*T.* It is no slight matter for us to be thwarted in the performance of our duties, and to have our prospects of advancement destroyed, to say nothing of the slights and disfavour which we encounter.

*P.* May you not draw comfort from the reflection that you will not be summoned, as in times of old, to endure martyrdom? Will not a little discretion, some watchfulness not to intrude unwelcome discussion, and to resist the temptation to engage in controversy where duty does not imperatively demand it, turn aside much of the injury which you think you have reason to apprehend?

*T.* May be. Discretion and vigilance are great safeguards. But it is no easy matter to cultivate independence of thought, and to escape being suspected of unbelief; and to be suspected is to be condemned.

*P.* To be suspected and condemned will be grievous or otherwise according to the character of the parties who suspect and condemn, and to the acts of which we are suspected. The praise of some people is more damaging than their blame; and we might be condemned for acts in which we glory. If independence of judgment be the privilege of but a few, and you are among those few, ought you to repine at the tax which is levied upon your privilege, or to rejoice at being admitted to participate in the privilege, subject as it is to taxation?

*T.* We ought to rejoice to be among the few who are subject

to taxation, while we exert ourselves to obtain relief by enlightening the ignorant, who are our task-masters. Apart from what you seem to think our unreasonable susceptibility, we may expect that the imputation of unbelief will bring with it diminution and insecurity of income, which we must provide against by extra economy. We must pay for the privilege of independent thought, as we pay for protection to person and property and for bread. It ought to be tax-free: and the tax levied upon it is one of those which ought to be repealed, because it benefits nobody. But we quite agree with you that till it is repealed they who pay it have the consolation of knowing themselves to be better off than the unfortunates who suffer the pains of ignorance and superstition.

*P.* We may now proceed to examine calmly and deliberately the nature of the evil of which you complain. You are suffering from an imputation arising out of the ignorance of others. While you suffer, you feel that you would rather endure the imputation than share the ignorance which inflicts it. Nevertheless, you would gladly be rid of it. Is relief obtainable, and if so, by what means?

*T.* Our only hope of procuring relief from evils inflicted through ignorance, must be by removing the ignorance.

*P.* Efforts to remove the ignorance which causes any particular evil, in order to be effective, require to be directed against that particular ignorance, and not left to make war against ignorance in general. The evil of which you have to complain is an imputation—the imputation of unbelief attached by ignorance to your intellectual acquirements. Can you tell me what is meant by “unbelief”?

*T.* The nearest approach to an answer that we can make to your question is, “an absence of belief in certain doctrines which are believed by those who cast the imputation, and which, they maintain, all ought to believe.” Of course, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the believers in one set of doctrines will thereby earn the character of “unbelieving dogs” from those who believe in another set.

*P.* Does not this impose upon us the duty of inquiring what is meant by "belief"? Is it the same as knowledge? Or when do people feel most confident, when they say "they believe," or when they say "they know"?

*T.* In common discourse we apprehend that the expression "to know" is used when certainty is felt; "to believe" when the feeling is somewhat short of certainty. We know that we are sitting together, that we are living in London, surrounded by other beings like ourselves. We know that other parts of the world were inhabited up to the latest time that we had intelligence from those parts; and we believe that they continue to be inhabited up to this time, although a calamity similar to that which overwhelmed Mendoza may have intervened to prove that we are mistaken in our belief. We know, also, what the appearances of the moon, the lengths of the day, and the varying positions of the planets, are owing to.

*P.* Is not the word "belief" on solemn occasions used to give expression to convictions quite as strong as, if not stronger than, those indicated by the word "knowledge"?

*T.* Belief in God, in the Saviour, in the Holy Ghost, in the immortality of the soul, in a future state of rewards and punishments, is meant to express strength of conviction no less remote from doubt than knowledge itself.

*P.* A word which at one time suggests doubt, and at another time gives expression to convictions more deeply seated than any obtainable by knowledge, ought to be examined with care. A slovenly or reckless application of such a word to subjects the most sacred cannot but be disgraceful, if it be not worse. Some preparation for a conscientious and satisfactory use of it in concerns of the greatest moment may be obtained by observing how we use it in more trivial concerns. Does the farmer who has gathered in an abundant harvest believe that he has done so?

*T.* Of course he does. But we would rather say that he knows it.

*P.* When, a little before harvest, he observes all the signs of a good crop, does he believe in its coming?

*T.* He might so express himself. We would say, he expects a good crop, feels certain of it, provided unfavourable weather do not intervene to destroy it.

*P.* And when the shipowner sees his vessel enter port and exchanges greetings with his captain, does he believe in her arrival?

*T.* Again we would say he knows it.

*P.* A short time before her actual arrival, knowing her steam-power and the length of her previous voyages, does he believe she will arrive on a certain day?

*T.* He expects that she will, although he knows that accidents might possibly prevent her arrival.

*P.* Suppose his vessel to be outward bound—say to Calcutta. In anticipation of letters by the overland mail, her loss or arrival is telegraphed; does he believe the intelligence?

*T.* He may or may not. He might know that the intelligence was false, because from other sources he had learned that his vessel was elsewhere—had put into some intermediate port, and could not possibly be where the telegram reported her to be arrived or lost.

*P.* If he had no such intelligence independent of the telegram, and believed the telegraphic message, but afterwards learned that it was erroneous, what would you say of his belief?

*T.* That he was mistaken in his belief—that he believed in error.

*P.* After such an occurrence, would he be as ready to believe a similar telegraphic message another time?

*T.* Possibly not. He might be more cautious; he might suspend his belief till the message was confirmed, thinking it very improbable, nevertheless, that such a mistake would be repeated.

*P.* When the mail arrives, bringing letters from his captain and agrees communicating the event, does he then believe it?

*T.* After this confirmation, we should say, he knows it.

*P.* Could he both believe and disbelieve the event communicated through the telegraph?

*T.* No. He might do either, or he might be undecided: he might doubt.

*P.* Could he believe the arrival without disbelieving the loss?

*T.* Clearly not. Belief must always imply disbelief. As to affirm necessitates denial.

*P.* Do ordinarily well-informed people believe the earth to be globular, that it rotates on its axis, and that, accompanied by the moon, it pursues its course round the sun?

*T.* They know it, and believe besides, that these motions will continue as heretofore.

*P.* Do they believe that the moon and the planets are inhabited?

*T.* They neither believe nor disbelieve it. They suspect that, if they are inhabited, the beings capable of living in them must differ greatly from terrestrial animals in their organization. The variety of conditions in which it has been discovered that life can be sustained ought to prevent our affirming that life might not be sustained in circumstances new or unknown to us.

*P.* Astronomers think that they discern the existence of mountains and valleys in the moon. Do they pretend to tell us anything about that portion of the moon which is never turned towards the earth?

*T.* Not to our knowledge. The best informed among men readily confess that there are many things of which they are ignorant.

*P.* Whether we use the word "believe," or the word "know," to give expression to our convictions, is it always implied that we deny that which is inconsistent with our affirmation?

*T.* It cannot be otherwise. To say that the earth rotates is to deny that it is immovable. To say that the ship is in port is to deny that it is lost. To say that the harvest is abundant,

is to deny that it is deficient. To believe the one is to disbelieve the other.

*P.* And would you not disbelieve him who pretended to tell you that the moon was inhabited ?

*T.* Unquestionably, because we know that he has no means of ascertaining whether the moon be inhabited ; and if so loose a talker deserved so much attention, we could easily make him admit to us, if not to himself, that he was indulging in silly chatter. Nevertheless, because we declined to believe in him, to accept his statements independently of proof, we would not affirm that what he stated without proof might not be true. Our state of mind in regard to the inhabitants of the moon would be one neither of belief nor of disbelief, but of unbelief.

*P.* And what may we prefix to belief in order to designate the state of mind of those who believe an event to have occurred which has not occurred, or who believe that the sun goes round the earth, or that the changes of the moon occasion the changes of the weather ?

*T.* We should call their state one of misbelief.\*

*P.* Pursuing our inquiry into the varieties of conduct, particularly of man to man and to society, are we justified in pronouncing that we believe some kinds of conduct to be good and others to be bad ?

*T.* Of many kinds we think we might say with propriety that we know them to be good or bad.

*P.* To avoid slipping, through inadvertence, into admissions

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\* "THE ARM OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.—The commission charged to carry back to Barcelona the right arm of St. John the Baptist left this city yesterday. This remarkable relic had been taken from Barcelona, to which place it belongs, to the oratory of the Queen, and the happy accouchment of her Majesty is ascribed to its influence. This holy relic was the object of great veneration on the part of the pious persons of Madrid all the time it was exposed in the church of San Francisco el Grande. The nuns were not deprived of the privilege of adoring it, the venerable Prior Commissioner, accompanied by three members of his order, having presented the precious treasure in each of the twenty-eight chapels of the convents of this capital.—*Madrid Gazette*."—*Times* newspaper, 1st Aug. 1861.

which you will not be able to sustain, will you furnish an example of both kinds of conduct?

*T.* To learn and labour truly to get one's own living, to be just in all one's dealings, to be careful in undertaking duties and entering into engagements, and scrupulous in fulfilling them, are examples of conduct which we should not hesitate to say we know to be good. And to yield to idle, drunken, dishonest courses, to ill-treat or neglect one's own children, to connive at child-neglect generally, to accept trusts, offices, or appointments, especially with emoluments attached, and religious duties assigned to them, conscious of the inability to perform what is required, or careless of anything beyond enjoying the income, we should no less hesitate to characterize as conduct which we know to be bad.

*P.* If you made use of the word "believe," would it be to indicate a feeling on your part short of knowledge?

*T.* Certainly not. Left to our own choice we should say "know." If asked whether we believed those two kinds of conduct to be respectively good and bad, we should answer yes, meaning that we knew them to be so.

*P.* When the men who practise these two kinds of conduct are brought to our notice, might we say that we believe them to be respectively good and bad men?

*T.* We do not see why we should not.

*P.* And might we say we know them to be good and bad respectively?

*T.* We think some distinction must be drawn. When we call men good or bad, we ought not only to mean that we know their past conduct to have been good or bad, but that we believe their future conduct will correspond with their past. Besides, we can never be quite sure that we are fully acquainted with the whole of any man's conduct.

*P.* Belief is here stopping short of knowledge, to assume the form of probability. Are there any means of measuring the number of degrees by which probability stops short of certainty, belief of knowledge?





*P.* Would your belief in a man's goodness, however great the number of those who fawned upon him, be shaken by a knowledge that he had countenanced and abetted the slaughter and plunder, imprisonment and expatriation, of thousands of his own countrymen ?

*T.* Surely there is no call for such a question !

*P.* Bear with me awhile. I have little doubt about your answer. But I wish to carry with me more than your tacit acquiescence, I want an expression of your conviction, strengthened with respect, affection, and veneration, or with disgust, abhorrence, and indignation, according as the acts and character which we have to believe in may call for either. How would your belief in a man's goodness stand the shock of your learning, that while he was surreptitiously filching from his countrymen, he openly exhorted and armed them to plunder others who trusted in them ?

*T.* Our belief in his goodness would make way for belief in his wickedness.

*P.* Would it be possible for you to retain a belief in the goodness of such a man, while fully persuaded of the truth of the slaughter, spoliation, peculation, and other abominations, with which he was charged ?

*T.* Certainly not.

*P.* And if you were to hear of certain of his adulators, who praised his goodness, and at the same time confessed to a knowledge of acts which you would consider enormities, and even approved and justified them ?

*T.* We should look upon him as a monster, and upon his adulators as cringing cowards, or as meaning by "goodness" a collection of qualities very different from that to which we should apply the name "goodness."

*P.* Then, supposing a man in whose goodness you believed, in the strongest sense of the term, were charged with a number of heinous offences, would you either refuse to listen to the imputations, or withdraw your belief in his goodness ?

*T.* If the imputations were no more than oft-repeated

## PHILO-SOCRATES

...the depravity of ignorance, ferocity, and baseness, as  
...to look to them. If they were brought forward for  
...whose characters entitled them  
...and consider it a duty to ask for the proofs.  
...a searching investigation, feeling it impos-  
...to tolerate a man of whose character for good-  
...of suspicion could rise up within us.  
...ourselves unreservedly to a belief  
...would you not require some evidence of

...we had obtained that evidence  
...and unhesitatingly.

...in rewards and punish-  
...conduct in this  
...your belief in his goodness?  
...from him, we do not see why  
...character for goodness in our  
...have heard many do, that the  
...prolonged to all  
...with Divine good-

...you are strongly at variance  
...around you. If the good  
...to place implicit confidence.  
...of a court of law, it would be

...our own con-  
...power as we are  
...to them, by remind-  
...judges at quarter-sessions  
...down to them from

...that I would not deter you  
...for yourselves. And the more  
...the duty of so doing.  
...the greatness of the autho-

city which you dissent from. You will find the metropolitan Rhadamanthus,\* as well as the provincial Midas, allowing a witness to be questioned upon the state of his belief, and refusing to receive his evidence, if he acknowledge his unbelief, or express disbelief in post-mortem torments.

*T.* Thieves, swindlers, and adulterers, might escape punishment through such a law of evidence; and the property and characters of men, of whom nothing worse could be said than that they are mistaken in their opinions, may be placed at the mercy of the vilest in society. If the only two witnesses who could prove a murder, were one who scrupled to kiss the Bible and take an oath, because the practice was irreconcilable with the injunction, "Swear not at all;" and another who disbelieved in Hell, are you quite sure that Rhadamanthus would connive at the murderer's escape?

*P.* Possibly he would try to overbear the scruples of the first by threats of legal penalties; and the judicial mind has not always been incapable of sending forth imputations against the latter.

*T.* We must not, however, hastily conclude that these denials of justice, these licences to crime, which cannot be of frequent occurrence, are the only fruits of belief in post-mortem torments by law-makers and judges. They may consider justice to be so greatly fortified by this belief that the hardship inflicted upon a few unfortunate and mistaken men, and the impunity granted to a few atrocious villains, however much to be lamented, must be endured for the sake of the greater good.

*P.* Can we feel sure of this greater good? Can we feel

\* 5th March, 1861.

"COURT FOR DIVORCE AND MATRIMONIAL CAUSES.

"(*Before the Judge Ordinary.*)

"A man, named Robert Roberts, was put into the box, but before he was sworn he was asked by Mr. Sergeant Wheeler whether he believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. He declined to answer the question, and was not allowed to give evidence."—*Times* newspaper, 6th March, 1861.

that law-makers and judges believe in the influence for truth and goodness of post-mortem rewards and punishments ?

*T.* They speak and act as if they did.

*P.* Which law-makers should you say believed most implicitly in the efficacy of the terrors of Hell over the minds of witnesses, those who attached legal penalties to the commission of perjury, or those who did not ?

*T.* Those who did not.

*P.* Do you know of any countries in which reliance is exclusively placed upon the influence of post-mortem punishments over the minds of witnesses, to deter them from perjury ?

*T.* We must bear in mind that law-makers, while they insist upon a belief in Hell, can get at no more than an expression of belief, while belief itself may not be felt. All conceivable precautions are, therefore, taken to secure truthfulness in witnesses. Cross-examination and threats of legal penalties are brought to bear upon witnesses, who might attempt to impose upon judge and jury, under the shelter of a belief which they profess, but do not entertain.

*P.* Is it supposed that most false witnesses are unbelievers ?

*T.* We never heard that affirmed. Believers are occasionally exposed to temptation beyond their strength.

*P.* We are in the same predicament as law-makers. We cannot feel quite sure of more than the expression of belief. I will ask, therefore, in which class of unbelievers—of those who avowed unbelief, or of those who professed belief,—would you expect to find the larger number of false-witnesses ?

*T.* In the class of those who professed belief. And, accordingly, we could not help preferring the testimony of those who avowed their unbelief to the testimony of those who pretended to believe. Before we placed reliance on the testimony of either, we should like to be informed of the probability of the events to which they testified, and of their previous characters, as far as ascertainable.

*P.* You would not be able to concur with our law-makers and judges in their choice of means for securing reliable

evidence to guide judicial decision or official selection for appointments of trust.

*T.* We could no more concur with them than they seem able to concur with themselves. Their expressions of belief are wider than the belief of which they give proof in conduct. And they wilfully deprive themselves of the testimony of those unbelievers of whose conscientiousness they have the strongest evidence, while they are confessedly impotent to exclude others from the witness-box.

*P.* May they not be doing still greater mischief? May they not be placing a conscientious witness in this perplexing position? It is known to the counsel on both sides that upon his evidence the decision must turn—whether a widow and fatherless children are to be plundered of their property, or the fair fame of a woman, up to that time without reproach, is to be blasted. “Do you believe in a state of future rewards and punishments?” asks the high-toned Christian advocate engaged on the side of the villain who has been prompted in his villany by the expectation that the evidence of the only witness who could foil him would not be received. Shall this unbelieving witness say no—the truth—and thus connive at the plundering of the widow and fatherless children, and at enabling a libertine to blast a woman’s fame; or shall he say yes, and by his lie save the helpless and the innocent from the pitfall prepared for them by the legislature, and into which the judge is ready to conduct them, with all the parade of justice?

*T.* A witness of the *non mi ricordo* stamp on the opposite side never fails in readiness to confess to any belief required of him, including belief in the remission of the sins which he is bent on committing.

*P.* There is another question which well deserves the attention of law-makers, and also of teachers. Does the belief in the continuance of life after death always conduce to good conduct on earth?

*T.* If the state of future existence be believed to be one of

happiness or misery, according to conduct on earth, that belief must surely conduce to good conduct on earth.

*P.* I suppose you mean—provided the estimate in the minds of believers of what will be considered conduct deserving of post-mortem happiness or misery by the Great Dispenser of future rewards and punishments, coincide with conduct which tends to promote general well-being? I was reading the other day of the slaughter of two thousand men and women at the funeral of an African king. It would have been thought indecorous for his majesty to make his entrance into the abodes of bliss without a numerous retinue. Do you think that belief in a post-mortem existence for evermore, the happiness of which is to be secured by such means, is more favourable to earthly well-being than unbelief in the prolongation of life after death?

*T.* We do not know that it has ever been pretended by Christians that belief in a future state of existence, severed from belief in Christ, was favourable to morality or conduct promotive of well-being on earth. One of the great arguments in support of the Christian religion is, that we have no justification for belief in the immortality of the soul, except through the gospel of Christ; and where a vague expectation of a future state of existence is to be found among heathens, that state is but a prolongation of the barbarous practices and vicious indulgences which constitute their conceptions of earthly happiness.

*P.* May I note it down as your opinion that a belief in a dispensation of rewards to be enjoyed, and punishments to be endured for evermore, will be favourable or unfavourable to earthly well-being, according to the conceptions of the rewards and punishments, and to the characteristics of the conduct for which they are to be awarded?

*T.* To dissent from that would be to express indifference or disregard for the morality inculcated in the gospels. No Christian, we imagine, would look for human improvement through a belief in eternal happiness derived from quaffing

blood or spirits out of the skulls of enemies slain in battle, or from gloating over their bleeding scalps dangling from one's girdle, or from the lascivious pleasures of the Harem—a happiness enlivened and set off by the sounds of the distant groans and shrieks of those who are suffering torture without intermission and without end.

*P.* When our legislators and judges reject the evidence of witnesses who do not believe in a life hereafter, wherein rewards and punishments are to be awarded according to conduct on earth, are they not abandoning, or refusing to accept, as they are ordinarily interpreted, some of what are held to be fundamental doctrines of Christianity?

*T.* We think that their absolute rejection of any evidence is injudicious. We can conceive no better course than that of trusting judges and juries to put their own value upon the evidence tendered for their acceptance under the legal penalties attaching to perjury. But it does not appear to us that our legislators, and our judges acting as legislators, derogate from their Christian character because they think differently.

*P.* Must we not admit that reliance upon the influence over a witness's mind of his belief in posthumous rewards and punishments ought to be proportioned to his conception of the certainty with which the rewards and punishments will be awarded?

*T.* So far as a witness might hope to escape the penalties, the possibility of which he believed in, so far also would the fear of those penalties be an untrustworthy security for his truthfulness.

*P.* If, then, a witness who might be tempted to perjure himself did not believe in the atonement and remission of sins, while he believed in posthumous punishment and the impossibility of escape from it, would he not be a much more reliable witness according to the views of our legislators and judges?

*T.* We don't see how we can avoid answering that question in the affirmative.

*P.* And are we not almost forced to suspect that our legisla-



tors and judges hold more by a future state of rewards and punishments than they hold by the atonement and remission of sins ? more by the old than the new law ? more by that part of their religion which is common to all religions than by that which is peculiarly Christian ? and ought they not to ascertain that witnesses attach as little weight as they apparently do to the doctrine of salvation through Christ ?

*T.* You have fairly puzzled us.

*P.* When to this unchristian custom of relying, or pretending to rely, upon a belief in post-mortem rewards and punishments as a check upon the mendacious propensity of witnesses, is added that of accepting a counterfeit for the genuine belief, the profession for the reality, one might wonder how a Christian judge of intelligence and integrity can preserve his gravity or smother his indignation while he administers the law according to the letter. One would also rejoice to see more activity, more zeal, more sense of dignity, more evidence of sincerity in the efforts of judges to procure those changes which would make the laws more conducive to the improvement of general morality, and the administration of them less repulsive to honourable men.

*T.* You must give us time to think over these, to us novel and startling objections to a method of treating witnesses, which has been so long in force.

*P.* There are yet other considerations which ought not to be lost sight of. Does it matter what notions Christians form concerning the future state of existence which awaits them, and concerning the kinds of conduct which are likely to entitle them to enter the abodes of everlasting bliss, or to consign them to torture without end ?

*T.* Certainly ; and yet we must not presume to arrogate to ourselves a foreknowledge of the judgments of our Heavenly Father, nor must we lack faith in the intercession of our blessed Redeemer.

*P.* But a belief in a life hereafter, the enjoyments and sufferings in which are to be irrespective of earthly conduct, could

exercise no influence for good over that conduct. And how can our law-makers and judges escape being chargeable with some such arrogance when they pronounce what will befall perjured witnesses in the life to come?

*T.* Without pretending to lay down the rule by which the Almighty will be guided in dispensing future rewards and punishments, or to dive into the innermost secrets of the hearts of men, we may confidently affirm that the good will be rewarded, and that the bad will be punished.

*P.* And does not this throw us back upon the question which we have so often discussed together? Are not men's conceptions of good and bad perpetually on the shift? Have we not passed in review a sufficient number of their reversals of judgment concerning right and wrong to convince us that if the interpretation of the Divine will could be accepted from man, the saints and sinners, the blessed and the damned, of different epochs would present to us a somewhat confused medley, little in accordance with the modern improved notions of right and wrong, good and bad, and still less with the unerring judgment of Infinite Wisdom?

*T.* These considerations ought to inspire us with the desire of perfecting ourselves in the knowledge of right and wrong, and of rising to a faint conception of that unerring judgment with which God will be pleased to distribute rewards and punishments in the life to come.

*P.* I have not yet been able to ascertain very clearly how far you think the belief in a dispensation of rewards and punishments in a state of existence after death is favourable to good conduct, and hence to well-being, during life on earth?

*T.* We have never before been subjected to such searching examination. We admit the inability which we feel to collect and arrange our thoughts, and to meet the numerous difficulties which you suggest. But we cannot hesitate to say that a belief in future rewards and punishments, in addition to those experienced during our brief period of life on earth, and to be dis-

pensed according as they are deserved, must strengthen the other securities which are taken for temporal good conduct and well-being.

*P.* And as Almighty wisdom and goodness cannot fail to dispense rewards and punishments according to that rule, it only remains for us to ascertain how far man's belief has, up to this time, coincided, or approached to coincidence, with the Divine standard. Have we any reason to suppose that the chief actors, in the massacres and wars, and the unrelenting persecutions recorded in the history of almost every age, were haunted by a belief of the never-ending torments which awaited them?

*T.* How they were haunted we cannot say. They do not appear to have been deterred by their belief from committing what we now hold to have been most atrocious crimes.

*P.* If earnestness of belief might be depended upon in any quarter, it would be among those whose lives are supposed to be devoted to the impressing of their belief upon others. A few years ago the legislature felt itself driven to interpose its control over funds left at the disposal of the bishops for spiritual purposes, so shockingly did those funds appear to be misappropriated. Enormous revenues are still trusted to them. How do they repay the confidence placed in them by their fellow-men? How do they seem to be affected by the hope of reward and by the fear of punishment, when they will be summoned before the throne of their Divine Master? The terrible state of spiritual destitution in every diocese is proclaimed by themselves. There are thousands upon thousands, according to their own lamentations, who for lack of instruction "do not know God." Are the reverend fathers in God, in the fear of His judgment and in the hope of His favour, foregoing every luxury, and even mortifying the flesh, so as to scrape together the means of supplying this spiritual destitution, and of making God known to all? or do they live in palaces, clothe sumptuously, feed luxuriously, frequent the mansions and tables of the great, trusting that their Saviour will intercede to screen them

from that everlasting punishment, unbelief in which, according to them, is so heinous a sin? Or is their belief an expression—an utterance to impose upon others—not an inward faith unmistakably manifested in their conduct?

*T.* We are at a loss to answer you.

*P.* Let us turn to the terrestrial judge upon the terrestrial judgment seat. How does his belief in rewards and punishments to be dispensed by his Heavenly Master in a life to come, influence his conduct in administering justice as a means of promoting earthly well-being? A juryman is summoned who declines to stifle his conscientious scruples and to desecrate the Bible while he kisses it. The judge commits him to prison or fines him. A witness steps into the box; he declines to affirm, in answer to the question put to him for the purpose of causing his evidence to be rejected, that he believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, and he is ordered to stand aside, and, may be, allow a triumph to fraud and injustice. On another occasion, after an atrocious criminal—a murderer—has been convicted, and the sentence of death, supposed by those who uphold it to be the most efficacious of the means for the prevention of crime, has been pronounced, the very same judge recommends the convict to make his peace with God, meaning thereby, if that recommendation be not a solemn mockery, that his crimes have not necessarily excluded him from the joys of heaven.

*T.* It almost looks as if legislators and judges, who persist in the exclusion of witnesses who avow their unbelief in a future state of rewards and punishments, ought also to object to witnesses who believe in the atonement and remission of sins, since the hope of forgiveness and remission might undermine the regard for truth in giving evidence built upon the belief in future rewards and punishments.

*P.* The extent to which belief in the atonement and remission of sins has been carried—witness the sale of indulgences in Catholic countries, and the assurances given by Protestant divines at the foot of the gallows—has awakened a feeling of

fear in some minds lest the efficacy of belief in future rewards and punishments should be on the wane. One can readily conceive, on the other hand, that many men occupying elevated positions in society, if they believe in a state of future rewards and punishments to be administered to them according to their deserts, would be very reluctant to abandon their belief in the remission of sins.

*T.* You have given us much to think over. We must confess that the contradiction between a reliance on the influence of a belief in future rewards and punishments to deter men from committing bad acts, and the doctrine of the atonement, had never occurred to us. We see clearly enough that these solemn and mysterious portions of our religion have been handled so as to impart no lustre to the intelligence or to the piety of our judges and divines. They give utterance to their belief first in one and then in the other, in such a way as to make it difficult to understand how they can believe in both, and to lead some people to entertain very serious doubts whether they believe in either.

*P.* We ought not to take leave of this subject without trying to put together the results of our reflections. "To believe" and "to know" are sometimes used as convertible terms, and at other times in different senses. Again, "to believe" is used, at one time, to express certainty of conviction, and at another no more than expectation approaching to certainty. It is also used to denote conviction based upon proof, beyond the reach of proof, and in opposition to proof. What are the resources within our reach for detecting the meaning of the word "belief" when it is used in treating on important subjects, to be misled in which is to incur the danger of becoming the victim of some vile superstition palmed upon ignorance under the name of religion?

*T.* The only resource that we are aware of is a careful attention to the signification of the word whenever it comes before us, in receiving and making communications, or in examining our own thoughts.

*P.* How would you determine when "to believe" was synonymous with "to know?"

*T.* By examining whether the matter believed was within the circle of things demonstrable. If it were, we cannot but think that it would be advisable to discard the expression "to believe" on such occasions, employing the words "to know" when we wish to designate things proved and things disproved.

*P.* How would you determine when to employ the term "to believe" in matters undemonstrable?

*T.* When we wish to express the state of our minds in regard to matters supernatural, such as "God," "the creation of the world out of nothing," "the existence of the soul when separated from the body," we say, "we believe." If we were told that the planets are inhabited, or that the creatures living in the moon had, like ourselves, been blessed with a revelation, we could not say that we disbelieved or believed the contrary, because these are not impossibilities. Our state would be simply one of "unbelief." But if we were told that God was angry, capricious, cruel, revengeful, delighting to goad man on against man, we should repudiate such fables as inconsistent with the Divine goodness and wisdom, in which we do believe. Without sinning against reason and probabilities, we may believe such a God to be the creation of men yet steeped in ignorance, the slaves of superstitious terrors, and delighting in slaughter and rapine.

*P.* Might it not be objected, It is not for you to judge of God's ways; man's ways are not His ways? and what you rightly call vile, hateful, or contemptible in man, would not necessarily be so in the Lord of all hearts and the Ruler of all men?

*T.* We should simply answer to such objectors, that it is our duty to guard our minds against these or any other representations of the Deity which we conceived to be derogatory to His high attributes; and that their attempts to shake our faith in those high attributes made us disbelieve in their fitness

to explain which were and which were not God's ways, or to make known where it became us to believe or to disbelieve, or where to remain in suspense between the two—in unbelief. Upon one point we could feel no doubt; we prefer to believe in the goodness of God without reservation, rather than in their attempts to make the revolting acceptable, or to obliterate the distinctions between good and bad, by pretending that villainess ceases to be vile if imputed to the Almighty.

*P.* Can you lay down any general rules by observing which conscientious people may be assisted to distinguish where belief in the supernatural may be granted, where it may be withheld, and where it must be refused?

*T.* You will excuse our hesitation in answering this question. We must ask you to accept the expression of what we would rather call our present leaning than our matured opinion. We may believe in the supernatural when it is not in opposition to reason; we may withhold our belief in it when, although not directly opposed to reason, it more resembles the vain imagination of man than the inspiration of God; and we must refuse our belief in the supernatural when it is opposed to reason. There is one test—a test accessible to all who will cultivate their understandings—by which the true revelations of God may be distinguished from the many spurious revelations and the disfigurements of the true current in the world: Are they or are they not, while above and beyond the limited range, the feeble grasp of human reason, perfectly in accordance with it as far as it does reach, satisfying its aspirations for truth and goodness, while opening beyond the glorious vista of that sublime truthfulness and that perfect goodness possible only to God Himself?

*P.* Might it not be inferred, from what you have been saying, that religion, contrary to the very general persuasion, is liable to suffer more from believers than either from unbelievers or disbelievers?

*T.* An ignorant and superstitious man is always more to be feared when arguing in favour of a good cause than in oppo-

sition to it. The overthrow of his absurdities may be mistaken for the overthrow of the cause to which he had attached his absurdities. A believer who identifies with his religion the atrocities, contradictions, and profligacies imposed upon him in conjunction with it, and clings to them as essential parts of it, refusing frantically to listen to persuasion or remonstrances, is one of its most dangerous enemies. He obstructs those who would deliver their religion from the monstrosities with which it is disfigured, and would disperse the clouds and mists which prevent its shining forth in all its glory. The credulous man who passes for a Christian, inflicts as much injury upon Christianity intellectually, as the bad man who shelters his iniquities under the same sacred name, inflicts upon it morally.

*P.* I should be acting unfairly if I did not invite your attention to the extraordinary discrepancy between your views and those of one of our eminent church dignitaries, as to the relative damage likely to be inflicted upon religion by credulous believers and intelligent inquirers. He says, of certain controverted interpretations of Scripture, that they must not be supposed even to be "open questions and fair subjects for discussion between Christians, still less between Church of England men."\* Do you know of any question which ought not to be considered by every man before he surrenders his belief to it, or objections to which ought to stir him to anger after he has surrendered?

*T.* His belief in any doctrine would be of little worth if he had not first withheld it; and he ought to mistrust his own mastery of the grounds of his belief, if unable to listen with calmness and decorum, nay, with respect, to the reasons put forth by others for wishing to modify the doctrines which he believes in, as a condition of accepting them.

*P.* What do you think of this dignitary, when he says of those who start objections to previously received interpretations of doctrine, that their "difficulties are to be set at rest in any

\* *Replies to "Essays and Reviews,"* with a preface by the Lord Bishop of Oxford. Oxford and London: John Henry and James Parker. 1862. p. iv.



mind rather by strengthening the deep foundations of the faith than by the laboured refutation of every separate, captious, and casuistic objection, [in which repugnance to all fixed belief of dogmas, as having been directly communicated by God to man, is wont to vent itself" ? \*

*T.* We marvel at his presumption in daring to arrogate to himself the right of imposing his doctrines on others, hiding his pretensions, we suppose, under the plea that he is a constituted interpreter of revelation.

*P.* But does not his holy office confer some such privilege, or, as he would say, duty upon him ?

*T.* We thought that in this country, at least, the right of interpretation was now admitted to belong to each individual—to be an inalienable right.

*P.* Do you acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority ?

*T.* Not over people's consciences.

*P.* Are you not propounding a doctrine which, in the present dearth of instruction, must leave vast numbers of people to wander in darkness ?

*T.* The dangers to which people are exposed through being left in darkness may be guarded against by enlightenment. We know of no security against the benumbing and degrading action of the subjection of conscience to priestly domination. Priestly domination must be kept off. If the clergy would devote their influence and energy to the enlightenment of the people, they would find their authority more respected. Authority need not be claimed—it will be ungrudgingly acknowledged where service is rendered and duties are faithfully performed.

*P.* I cannot see that any provision is made by you for spiritual authority in matters of belief.

*T.* If by spiritual authority you mean power over the consciences of others, except through persuasion and instruction and the influence of piety, of kindness of demeanour, and of conduct, we confess that we have made no provision.

*P.* Have you not omitted to make allowance for "our

\* *Idem*, p. iv.

limited faculties" which, according to the dignitary already cited, make open questions dangerous? Do you not fear with him that our limited faculties might be unequal to the task of closing "open questions"?

*T.* History supplies more examples of human degradation and suffering occasioned by questions kept closed and unsolved by "limited faculties" than by questions opened and kept open till their solution could be accomplished; and of all limited faculties, those of ecclesiastics have not been the least conspicuously active in enchaining human intellect.

*P.* Our dignitary might be troubled to answer your "objection," although he would not hesitate to call it "casuistic," and he will continue to insist upon obedience from the "lower orders" of his clergy.

*T.* And to obedience, in one sense, he will be entitled. But if he claim, through his "casuistic" interpretation of obedience, to domineer over their belief, his authority ought to be resisted.

*P.* I do not know whether you are alive to the difficulties which your notions, if acted upon, would place in the way of all Church government.

*T.* Possibly we are not. It must be left to the authorities of each church so to shape their rules of government as to make them assist in promoting, not in obstructing, the spread of intelligence, truthfulness and religion. And it will be well for them to understand that ecclesiastical authority partakes no more of divine authority than any other, and confers no right to domineer over belief. Hence it must remain with each clergyman under this authority to decide for himself whether his own belief is reconcilable with abiding in the Church or whether it necessitates his secession.

*P.* Another question suggests itself to me here. If we were summoned to surrender our belief, not according to the impression made upon us by evidence and reason, but in obedience to the dictates of authority: which, among all the authorities claiming our obedience, would you surrender to?

*T.* To the most reasonable.

*P.* You are not answering my question ; for you say you would yield to reason, when I am asking how you would decide if appealed to by authority independently of reason.

*T.* We must then confess our inability to answer.

*P.* If two authorities were to claim your belief and obedience, the representatives of one being well paid for recommending their "articles," and the representatives of the other being liable to contumely and deprivation for recommending theirs : towards which would you feel more powerfully attracted ?

*T.* Towards the latter, of course. Reason, however, again, would have much to do even in that. But we should wish to examine the "articles" for ourselves.

*P.* In other words, you wish to have a "reason for the faith that is in you." I must yet mention another fact, which, perhaps, will have some weight with you. This dignitary announces that he has commended the effort to crush those who question the exposition of "belief" by which he abides, to the prayers of the Church ; and it may be fairly presumed that he has thrown the weight of his own prayers into the same scale.

*T.* Before we could say what deviations from reason ought to be admitted on these grounds, we must know what prayers were offered, as they doubtless must have been, on the other side. It is said that, in war, God favours those who possess the best weapons, and know best how to handle them. In controversy, also, may be, He favours the rifled barrel of reason more than the smooth bore of dogma. The efficacy of prayer, as a substitute for reason, has been well illustrated in the person of Joseph Smith, the father of Mormonism. Bewildered by the eminent divines who preached the Gospel to him, searching for truth, and unable to find it with their help, and mistrusting his "limited faculties," he retired into the woods to pray. According to him, the Lord listened to his prayers, and not only assisted him to a satisfactory interpretation of Scripture, but also gifted him with inspiration. Later in his career, when other inspired men made their appearance, and

their inspirations were not always compatible with his own, he cautioned his followers that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between the inspirations of God and those of the "Evil One." His method of solving the difficulty was convenient, if not original. Your ecclesiastical dignitary might be thought to have been educated in his school, so perfect is the resemblance between the two. "For," said Joseph Smith, "mine is the true inspiration; mine, therefore, is from God: and all inspirations that do not conform to mine must be from the 'Evil One.'"

## ON THEOLOGICO-INTELLIGENCE.

*T.* As the disadvantages under which we have laboured from the very commencement of our intellectual training are well known to you, our ignorance, or more properly, the state of misapprehension and misdirection in which you found us, cannot have taken you by surprise. But it is a matter of wonder to us that the questions raised by you, palpable as they now appear, should never have been presented to us before. Our instructors, we are confident, could not wilfully have kept us in the dark on matters of deep interest, not only to us, but to the children whom we were destined to teach. And yet it is difficult to imagine that they should have been in the dark themselves; for they, and still more the higher authorities who appointed them, were cultivated men—men upon whose education no pains had been spared, and the development of whose intelligence may be supposed to have been aided by the best lights of the age in which they were born. How, then, do you account for our having been allowed to lose ourselves in the labyrinth, out of which we trust that you have at last extricated us?

*P.* According to my habit, I would rather assist you to answer this question for yourselves. Let me ask: if you had lived in the days of Locke or Newton, and the general education of the people had then been thought of, would your trainers or those who appointed them, have attempted to imbue you with the doctrines of those illustrious men, or with the doctrines which they were superseding?

*T.* Of course, not with the new doctrines.

*P.* Would they have brought the new doctrines to your notice, and have given you the opportunity of weighing the evidence by which each—both the new and the old—were supported, and of then electing between them for yourselves?

*T.* Most probably not.

*P.* Would not the supposed trainers of those times, and the men in authority who appointed them, have been among the highly educated of their day?

*T.* That also, we suppose, can hardly be doubted.

*P.* It appears, then, that to be highly educated, according to any standard of excellence hitherto accepted, perhaps according to any possible standard, is not a perfect security against misdirection.

*T.* Time, we presume, must be allowed for the spread of new ideas, even among the best educated.

*P.* Can you form any notion as to the length of time which ought to elapse before truths newly brought to light will be so far received among the highly educated, as that all teachers under their control will be qualified to impart them in their turn to the children?

*T.* We must admit our inability to answer that question.

*P.* As the question is one of considerable importance, especially in regard to the truths which bear directly upon the welfare of the people, we ought not lightly to give it up as unsolvable. We may inquire: what is meant by a highly-educated man?

*T.* One who has been put in the way of mastering the knowledge and acquirements of his age, allowance being made for the absence of those special attainments which must be confined to particular classes and professions.

*P.* As the acquisition of the knowledge and attainments up to any given time does not carry with it the future knowledge and attainments that the progress of the age may bring forth, the rapid and general diffusion of which may be most desirable; how do we find those reputed to be highly educated compare with others in the readiness with which they accept, and in the

zeal with which they promulgate and teach the new truths presented to them ?

*T.* The more the mind is enlarged by education, the greater must be its aptitude to investigate new phenomena, and to receive new truths ; and it may be expected that zeal in communicating the benefit of them to others would not be lessened by increase of intelligence.

*P.* Is it certain that what you call enlargement of mind is always to be found in conjunction with quantity of knowledge, or must the quality of the knowledge be taken into account also ? Do we not find that the world is indebted for many of its great discoveries, and for the zeal with which they have been promulgated, to men excluded from the ranks of the learned ?

*T.* We certainly do. But was it their want of learning that enabled them to confer such obligations upon us ; or were they able to confer them upon us in spite of their want of learning ?

*P.* We may safely say the latter. But this admission still leaves to be settled what that is which is wanted in the learned to qualify them to be foremost in discovering and diffusing useful truths, and what that is in the unlearned which confers this distinction upon them.

*T.* We must look to you to point out what that is which is needful to raise the learned, who are so much above the unlearned in some respects, to a level with them in others.

*P.* I am far from thinking that I shall be able to satisfy you ; but the subject is worth inquiring into, even if it is beyond our power to clear it up. Some part of this apparent and undesirable disparagement of what is included under the names of education and learning, may originate in a confused and mistaken use of those terms. Run over in your minds the qualifications which, in your opinion, entitle a man to take rank among educated and learned men.

*T.* We suppose that this rank would be denied to no man who was an accomplished classical scholar, who kept up the learning of which distinguished university honours were both

the stamp and the promise, and who, besides, was well read in modern literature, that of foreign countries included.

*P.* Would accomplishments like these be possible with a very limited and superficial knowledge both of physical and social science?

*T.* They would; but the capacity, matured by the acquisition of such attainments, would remove all doubts as to their possessors being able, in case of need, to master other attainments, and being free from all that narrowness which disinclines from the examination and study of the novelties presented for that purpose by the ordinary current of events.

*P.* An educated and learned man, in the common acceptance of the terms, will mean a man well versed in literature, ancient and modern, and I will add, besides, what does not always accompany this knowledge, familiar with the ideas, manners, and transactions treated of in that literature. We shall, then, know this much of him: that he has considerable powers of application, and that he has been in the habit of mastering what he applies himself to; that, as part of his classical entertainments, he is familiar with the ideas as well as the literature of the ancients, and that with his modern literature is united familiarity with the topics generally handled by literary men. What will you know or infer from all this of his readiness to inquire into new suggestions, and of his sagacity in detecting their merits or demerits?

*T.* We can hardly be expected to infer much more than that he will most likely surpass, in all these respects, less or ill educated men.

*P.* Suppose the new suggestion bore upon a chemical subject, what would your expectation be of him, as compared with an accomplished chemist?

*T.* The chemist, of course, would take a more lively interest in any subject connected with his own science, and be more likely to investigate it to good purpose.

*P.* Would your answer be similar, if the suggestion bore upon physiology, upon astronomy, upon mechanics, or upon



any other department of knowledge which involved the necessity of tracing cause and effect, and of selecting and using the appropriate means to ends, for the purpose of making the observations and experiments requisite for establishing that connection?

*T.* It would. We perceive that you incline to have the attention of the young more directed than it has hitherto been to science.

*P.* You compel me to caution you again. You really ought not to be perpetually on the watch to ascertain whither my inclinations may lead me. They may lead me astray; but they need not for that reason mislead you. Your leanings may be in that direction. Or they may have been in an opposite direction, and you are beginning to suspect misdirection. But, because my questions disturb your feelings of security, do not conclude that when you waver on one side, I incline to the other. A new suggestion, destined to change the face of the earth, has been made within our recollection by George Stephenson. Was it welcomed more heartily by engineers than by scholars, by men of science than by men of letters?

*T.* It is said that he was opposed by the whole corps of scientific engineers.

*P.* And how did it fare with the suggestions of Harvey and Jenner? Did they derive their support from scientific men, *i. e.* from the men presumed to be scientific in their own professions, or from those continually forthcoming vigorous and intelligent recruits out of the masses not yet immovably tied down to the knowledge or science, call it which you will, so far accepted?

*T.* Having first shaken us, you are now making us oscillate.

*P.* If after being shaken out of repose in error, and set oscillating in doubt, you should gravitate towards a course of inquiry that will lead you to convictions for which you can give satisfactory reasons, you will forgive my having disturbed

you. I must draw your attention to another phenomenon exhibited to the world by men of science. Are you not aware that men of wide reputation for eminence in special sciences have been victims of the most childish superstitions, enchained by the wildest of obsolete prejudices, and bamboozled and befooled by impostors who rival professed conjurors in everything except their skill and plain-dealing?

*T.* We are; and yet we cannot bring ourselves to think that either literary or scientific attainments tend to disincline men to listen to new suggestions, or to unfit them for investigating and accepting what of truth such suggestions may contain.

*P.* I don't know why you should make any effort for the purpose. It would interest me greatly, and perhaps it might interest you also, to ascertain whether there is any process which literary and scientific men have been put through that disinclines them to look at suggestions apparently subversive of some of their established convictions; from which process men not regularly trained to literature or science may have escaped. Can you think of any?

*T.* You are taking us out of our depth.

*P.* I may possibly be out of my own also. Let us try in another direction. You are, doubtless, acquainted with many men who have obtained diplomas, and who have passed examinations with similar success according to the examiners' reports. Do they all stand equally high in your estimation, either for the solidity of their attainments, or for the ardour with which they are trying to perfect them?

*T.* Certainly not. Some of the men, we are confident, did little more than cram for their examinations. Others pursued their studies with ardour for the sake of the knowledge and self-improvement which they were intent upon, going through the ordeal of examination as a passport to enter upon their professions. Men of the latter stamp are found to stand lower than some of their cramming competitors in the examiner's reports; but they soon go a-head in life.

*P.* Granting equality according to some standard of literary and scientific attainments, but inequality as regards ardour for truth and self-improvement, where should you expect to find greater readiness to consider and appreciate new suggestions?

*T.* Among those, of course, who were superior in zeal for truth and self-improvement.

*P.* Supposing these latter to be greatly inferior in literary and scientific knowledge, should you expect that they will be also inferior in readiness to consider and appreciate new suggestions as stepping-stones to new truths and self-improvement?

*T.* On the contrary, we should expect that superiority of zeal for self-improvement would more than compensate for considerable inferiority in the amount of knowledge actually in possession.

*P.* To revert to the different influence upon the understanding and the disposition between literary and scientific studies, the one having to do with language and the other with the connection of cause and effect in phenomena; which, in your opinion, would most predispose students to welcome and investigate new suggestions?

*T.* Scientific studies; for a student cannot engage in them without having phenomena new to him, and perhaps to the world, forced upon him: whereas the student of classical literature is essentially buried in the past, and the student of modern literature is not likely to be tempted far into the future. But we must not forget, with every wish to lead youth to engage in scientific studies, that great authorities hold that literary studies ought to take precedence. Literature, they say, is better fitted than science to the juvenile capacity; and profound scholarship—for that is the name given to high attainments in literature—is the best preparation both for the performance of professional duties and for mastering the difficulties of science.

*P.* I have heard this notion frequently propounded, and would gladly consider any evidence vouchsafed in support of

it. Good scholars and university men keep repeating it. But the rapid and wide development of scientific truths of late years is sweeping this with other unwarranted assumptions into the obsolete past. An ex-judge, in imitation of Canute of old, was valiantly placing himself not long ago, in opposition to the current. If the question were to be determined by authority, and the object of classical attainments was to produce a judge distinguished for a rigorous administration of the law as he found it, without a useful thought for its amendment, a strenuous leaner upon precedents, whether favourable or not to the progress of society, and a determined opponent of every reform that might be wrung during his career from those who held hard by what had been handed down to them, as regardless of new and improved thoughts as handloom weavers were of the overwhelming power of steam: in that case the superior efficacy of literature in forming the mind is not to be doubted. But a question such as this is not to be settled by authority, least of all by that of a mind formed through a long course of deference to authority and precedents, any dawning disposition to original inquiry having been stifled in classical literature. Neither you nor I can lay claim to much scholarship, but does your experience lead you to think that knowledge of language is better and more easily attained through objects and ideas, or independently of them?

*T.* Some of us have tried both ways. Among us there is now but one opinion—that instruction in objects and phenomena should proceed *pari passu* with, if it do not take the lead of, instruction in language, with a view even to literary attainments alone.

*P.* Would this opinion be strengthened, if your wish were to qualify your pupils for grappling with the realities of life—matters known, and matters to be learned?

*T.* Certainly it would.

*P.* Would extra literary attainments be dearly purchased by the sacrifice of any portion of these latter qualifications?

*T.* We should say at a frightful price.

*P.* Does it not, to say the least, admit sufficiently of doubt to deserve very serious consideration, whether that exclusive straining after literary cultivation does not tend to disincline for the examination of new suggestions, thoughts, and manifestations, the sources whence all further progress must emanate?

*T.* We are strongly of opinion that to pursue such a course with the young is most reprehensible, and must impede that increase and spread of knowledge which it is the duty of everybody to promote.

*P.* If these considerations were to obtain weight, and lead to a greater attention to scientific, in combination with literary attainments, we should still have to inquire whether there has been any peculiarity in the method of imparting instruction, which can have led men called scientific, to oppose fiercely, as worthless novelties, some of the noblest contributions to science. You know how fond I am of so conducting lessons as to lead pupils to make for themselves the discoveries which have already been made by others, to prove what they accept as truths, to disprove what they reject as errors. Do you think, if instruction were always conveyed, when possible, in that manner, the practice of presenting successive items of knowledge as truths to be accepted without question being avoided, that any advance would be made towards producing a readiness, or preventing a disinclination to attend to new suggestions, and to seek for evidence of what of truth or error might be lurking in them?

*T.* We can hardly suppose that any teachers would dissent from your opinion, that it is desirable to lead pupils to observe, to examine, to weigh evidence for and against, to adopt conclusions, and then to test them; in other words, to give pupils those helps which their teachers' superiority places at their disposal to make their own discoveries. The process of making discoveries must leave the understanding in a more healthy state to deal with future new suggestions, than that of accepting discoveries ready made. The objection to this pro-

cess, they will say, is its tediousness, its difficulty, its all but impracticability.

*P.* May not every particle of this objection originate in deficiency of teaching power? You have talked of a cram for literary honours. May there not also be a cram for the scientific? And may not the end of both be a sense of repletion, an absence of appetite for further acquirements, a want of relish for intellectual exercise, a lethargic dislike of all intruders upon those who are perfectly satisfied, confined within a small circle of knowledge, unconscious of the wider expanse from which they are self-excluded?

*T.* Giving the fullest weight to all your reflections upon the method of conducting education—particularly that which is regarded as superior education—you appear to us to have failed in accounting for the inveterate dislike which is felt both to your proposed exclusion of the Bible from schools, and to your methods of instruction.

*P.* If this inveterate dislike be as strong as you represent, and as I apprehend it to be, may it not originate partly in moral, and not wholly in intellectual causes?

*T.* We do not know how they can be entirely separated. Increase of knowledge brings with it change of judgment; and is not that a new moral cause?

*P.* Certainly; and my language requires to be corrected. My thoughts, just now, in drawing a distinction between intellectual and moral causes, were fixed upon those exercises of the intellect which are directed to the physical sciences. I would not even say that moral causes are entirely severed from them. But I was leaving aside those exercises of the intellect which are turned upon the moral and social sciences—upon the causes and consequences of human conduct. Intellectual and moral causes in that branch of study are indeed inseparable. You have recognized the superior influence upon the understanding of actively discovering over passively receiving a scientific truth. Would the first method of acquiring a moral truth also exercise a superior influence?

*T.* Even more strongly. The experience which we have so far gained in teaching our own children, has impressed us deeply with the beneficial consequences of this mode of teaching moral truths, or rather of leading the children to learn them.

*P.* As our object just now is to account for the reluctance to listen to new suggestions, and even to admit the possibility of extracting moral truths and considerations, hitherto unthought of, out of them, I will ask whether a knowledge of the distinctions between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, pious and impious, is supposed to be imparted at our universities?

*T.* Even to us you ought not to put a question in a form, which if it were put to the University authorities, would be considered an insult. There can be no doubt that those distinctions are specially meant to be taught there, whatever we may think of their method of teaching. The students who are destined for holy orders, are they not also destined to disseminate this knowledge throughout the land?

*P.* We now have the subject of our inquiry well before us. How are the most carefully educated, and particularly our future clergy, taught the distinctions between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false, good and bad, pious and impious? Are they, under capable guidance, invited to inquire, and to discover for themselves some test by which they may be helped to draw these distinctions, or are they partly commanded, partly encouraged by example and advice, to accept these distinctions ready drawn for them by others?

*T.* We are not aware that the practice of searching for the foundation of the distinction between right and wrong, is at all cultivated in our universities. We can only speak from hearsay. Our impression is that students there are expected to receive moral and religious precepts unquestioned, are cautioned against much questioning, and that their acquirements in what goes by the name of moral philosophy are estimated by the accuracy and retentiveness of their memories applied to the

contents of books—to what other people have pronounced to be sound doctrine.

*P.* May I record it as your opinion, that the examiners and judges of university proficiency in moral philosophy are more intent upon ascertaining that students have acquired the ability to reproduce other people's thoughts, than that they have acquired any thoughts of their own useful to possess or creditable to produce?

*T.* Our impression certainly is that the studies of the young men at our universities are conducted more with a view to qualify them to reproduce doctrines ready prepared for them, and to explain and justify those doctrines by prearranged arguments and proofs held to be sufficient, rather than to produce doctrines made their own by careful study and selection, to state the grounds on which they have adopted those doctrines in preference to many others, and to answer the objections that might be plausibly urged against them.

*P.* Is not the application of such a test likely to lead to what you call a cram—a cram morally, as well as a cram intellectually?

*T.* We don't see our way to defend the practice, or to understand how students can escape damage from it.

*P.* As far as instruction in morals and religion is concerned, it would be an injustice to our universities to suppose that more than ordinary pains are not taken to give their theological students the full benefit of it. If from the method of imparting instruction in morals, we turn to the examination of its results, we can look to no quarter so appropriately as to the clerical. In our earlier conversations we referred to some of the extraordinary reversals of judgment that have occurred within the century upon the kinds of conduct which ought to be sanctioned or otherwise. How have the clergy figured in regard to these great national and moral improvements?

*T.* As a rule, they do not profess to put themselves forward. We don't know on what principle they conduct their teaching. They are conspicuous for their activity and devotion in chari-



table works. That merit is due to them. But their teaching seems to be as far removed as possible from rules of conduct applicable to the everyday work of life.

*P.* This, of itself, is not a commendable result of University instruction. But when they have taken a part, and the bishops by their position are compelled to do so, have they been forward or backward in promoting all those changes which are now unanimously admitted to be improvements—substitutions of the better for the worse judgment, of truth for error, of right for wrong?

*T.* They have the reputation of having been backward; and we cannot prove that they do not deserve it.

*P.* Even if this reputation or imputation be undeserved, is it not sad that it should be afloat, whether owing to popular ignorance, or to the over-modesty on the part of the clergy, which keeps them back from claiming a reputation more in harmony with their merits?

*T.* We wish they would get rid of their over-modesty, if that alone stands in the way of their disproving so odious an imputation.

*P.* But if there be some foundation for the character which they have earned, swelled into undue proportions, as will happen when people are kept in the dark, the real proportions of a character attached to so important a body as our most prominently placed instructors must interest us deeply. Ought we not to be anxious—to be almost deprived of peace of mind, till convinced that we had spared no pains in order to ascertain the causes which lead to a disposition, if not to obstruct, certainly to hang back from promoting progress? Can theological studies, as they are pursued, in any way favour the idea that new developments are not to be expected; that it is wrong even to look for them?

*T.* We should say that they did, so far as students are confined within certain limits of inquiry, or, if that be an incorrect mode of stating the practice, are tied down to arrive at certain conclusions after inquiry.

*P.* I have often wondered that professors of theology should inflict these cramping conditions upon their pupils. Have they less faith than teachers of science in the truth of what they teach, or less confidence in their teaching power?

*T.* They would admit neither. The rule imposed upon theological students arises out of the very nature of the subject to be learned—the Scriptures; in which there has been, and can be, no change.

*P.* Are the professors and students of theology, and the professors and students of science, differently circumstanced in reality, or only in appearance? You say that the Scriptures are unchanged and unchangeable. Is this more true of the Scriptures than of the order of nature—of the laws of the universe and of its component parts, the foundation and material of all science? Does any body pretend that they have changed?

*T.* They may not actually have changed; but to men's eyes and hands they have changed, and greatly too. Since the Scriptures were vouchsafed to man, the universe and all its parts are to man as if they had been remodelled.

*P.* And yet the structure of the universe and of all its parts is unchanged?

*T.* If we did not know you so well, we should think you a little captious. The foundation and material of science, as you term them, are unchanged; but men through successive ages, by observation, experiment, and reflection, have become acquainted with so many particulars previously unknown to them, that the world of their forefathers may almost be said to have given place to a new world.

*P.* And in what state of mind, in regard to this new world, are modern men of science? Do they think they have reached the limits of what can be learned of it?

*T.* They would smile at our simplicity if we were to put such a question to them.

*P.* Am I wrong in concluding that you agree with me thus

far: that students of theology and students of science are similarly circumstanced in this respect—that the foundation and material for their studies are, so far as they know, unchanged and unchangeable? Briefly expressed, the “word” is the subject to be studied by one, the “world” by the other: each what it was in the beginning; each destined, so far as we know, to continue as it is and has been to the end.

*T.* Are not some of the discoveries made by geologists a little at variance with a statement so generally expressed?

*P.* I never heard it maintained, remarkable as may have been the changes in the arrangements and combinations of the elementary substances of which the earth is constituted, that the elements themselves are different. There are no truths connected with chemistry, electricity, astronomy, &c., that the masters of those sciences would not be prepared to say have held good within the period recorded in history. To guard against the chances of error suggested by your question, shall we limit ourselves to saying that the “word” and the “world,” as subjects of study, have undergone no change since the commencement of the Christian era, and that they are accepted for purposes of study as unchangeable?

*T.* As all the researches of scientific men proceed upon the assumption of an established order of nature, we cannot object to start from this position.

*P.* Let us now inquire how the two classes of subjects included respectively in the “word” and the “world,” so similar as to their presenting unchanged and unchanging matter for investigation, are treated by students. The students of the “world,” you say, would smile at my simplicity, if I intimated a doubt whether they thought they had any thing more to learn. How is it with the students of the “word”?

*T.* They are also busily engaged in making themselves acquainted with their bratch of study.

*P.* We will grant that both classes of students are equally earnest and equally industrious. How do they respectively prosecute their work? Are the students of science busily

engaged in ascertaining what the fathers of science thought and said hundreds of years ago, learning ancient languages in order to read their lucubrations in the original, tacitly assuming that all the knowledge which they can hope to acquire is only to be drawn from those ancient sources? or are their thoughts principally bent upon turning to account each advance in knowledge beyond that made by their predecessors, to use it as a power by which to discover something more, with the conviction strong upon them that the mine of discoveries yet to be explored is inexhaustible?

*T.* There can be no doubt that the state of mind, and the method of proceeding based upon it, with students of science, is not only that they know much more than their forefathers, but that their children and children's children for many generations are destined, by continual searching, to heap acquirement upon acquirement.

*P.* Will you now tell me what students in theology are doing?

*T.* We suppose it must be admitted that they are doing the very reverse of these things. They recognize that they have in the Scriptures a mine of spiritual knowledge. But they have no notion of striking any new guiding light out of it. It would be considered dangerous, if not sinful, to make the attempt. At all events, it is discouraged. There are the Scriptures. Students have to learn what is in them. The mastery of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages will enable them to compare the originals with the translations; and they may study what divines and others who have established a reputation for piety and learning have considered them to contain. They may then repeat and promulgate what they have learned, provided it be certified by the authorities of their own days to correspond with the doctrine received in the past.

*P.* Before I ask what difference of effects must be produced on the understandings and feelings of two classes of students who pursue so very different a course in their studies, I will

put the matter in another point of view. It is difficult and important enough to deserve all the light that can be thrown upon it, and to require examination on all sides. Let us consider how men in their collective capacity are conducting and have conducted themselves in regard to what theologians will not, I presume, object to their being called, the two great gifts bestowed upon them—the “world” and the “word.” How do they study the first?—as if they knew all, or as if they had yet much to learn about it?

*T.* As if they had much to learn. Each generation of students goes to the work in the persuasion that it has two things to accomplish: one to make itself acquainted with what has already been learned; the other to make a further inroad, with the aid of that knowledge, upon the ignorance from which it seems to be man's destiny gradually, through ages, to emancipate himself.

*P.* How do they study the second?—as if they knew all, or as if they had yet much to learn about it?

*T.* As if all that could be learned had already been learned; and as if the task allotted to each generation of students was confined to mastering that knowledge, by studying what past authorities had pronounced it to be. The further duty appended to this task is to preserve the knowledge which is thus inherited, and hand it down to another generation in the same state of preservation that it had been imparted.

*P.* Would these two courses of study, pursued in so very different a spirit, produce different states of mind in the students?

*T.* Students who pursued both would feel it to be their duty as well as their inclination to be on the alert for discovery in the first; while in the second it would be their duty to repress any inclination even to think discovery possible.

*P.* While we separate science from theology, the “world” from the “word,” for the convenience of studying each minutely and uninterruptedly, can they be kept apart in reality, as though they were entirely unconnected?

*T.* We suppose not. But we are not quite sure that we perceive the scope of your question.

*P.* My purpose will be gained if you will tell me whether you think that a student of theology in these days, if enlightened with merely a smattering of modern science, could read and interpret the Scriptures, as he would have read and interpreted them 500 years ago?

*T.* He could not do it, were he to try.

*P.* Would he interpret them now more in harmony with exalted notions of the Divine attributes—more as manifestations of the will of Him who is the perfection of goodness and wisdom, than he could have interpreted them 500 years ago?

*T.* More of course.

*P.* Is it a fact that theologians have too often been foremost in rejecting with indignation new contributions to science as hostile to Scripture, because they were irreconcilable with their interpretations of Scripture?

*T.* We certainly have to admit and regret that fact. Happily, succeeding theologians have become conscious of the mistakes of their predecessors, and have discovered that the Scriptures are beautifully in harmony with interpretations of science once by them pronounced to be false, since admitted to be incontrovertible.

*P.* May we congratulate modern theologians on having entirely abandoned the vicious mental courses of their predecessors?

*T.* Your congratulations would, we fear, be premature.

*P.* Is it a safe state of mind, to be able to think it possible for any truth to be opposed to religion?

*T.* We should call it a most dangerous state.

*P.* Does it happen that students of science are occasionally putting forward as truths what in reality are mere semblances of truth—illusions imperfectly examined?

*T.* Such ill-considered pretensions have often been witnessed.

*P.* Ought not theologians to expose them as opposed to religion ?

*T.* They will do that sufficiently by laying bare the illusions. The vindications of science and religion go hand in hand.

*P.* In what state of mind ought students of science to be as regards interpretations of Scripture ?

*T.* Full of faith that no new developments of theirs can be antagonistic to religion correctly expounded ; full of ardour to strike out new lights, not only for the advance of scientific knowledge, but for the additional power acquired of vindicating " the ways of God to man."

*P.* In what state of mind ought students of theology to be as regards science ?

*T.* Anxious to avail themselves of every new light and power that it can furnish wherewith to draw continually new instruction and new causes of reverence and gratitude from the new proofs of wisdom and benevolence hidden from the eyes of their fathers ; and shuddering at the thought of ever presenting religion as an obstacle to the reception of offerings from students of science. These offerings need to be scrupulously examined. If unsound, they are false, and therefore contrary to religion. If sound, true, and therefore in accordance with religion.

*P.* Putting all your answers together, do you not think that you are provided with the means of solving, partly, at all events, the enigma which has puzzled you—how it has happened that your instructors should have left you so entirely unsuspicious of the incapacity of children to grapple with the difficulties and appreciate the beauties of Scripture—sublime and striking when brought to light—though often buried deep beneath the surface ? and how it has happened that you should have been led to believe that all the great truths contained in Scripture had been elaborated ages ago by our forefathers, who have, accordingly, left us nothing to do but to study their comments, or repose upon the authority of those who had studied them, holding in pious horror any attempt to draw forth new beauties,

new manifestations of wisdom hitherto concealed from those who lacked the aid since contributed through the united researches of all engaged in the study of science ?

*T.* We begin to see how it has happened that we were sent forth from the training colleges in the pitiable state in which you found us, as regards the spiritual and moral portion of our duties towards the children under our care. As we certainly were not acquainted with the principles and rules of good self-guidance, and could not, therefore, teach them ; so we necessarily could not give that intellectual and moral training which would incline children to conform to rules unknown to them as well as to ourselves.

*P.* A few minutes will not be misapplied in examining how the right state of mind in regard to self-guidance should be cultivated in the young, so as most certainly to produce the desired effect. How do you propose to yourselves to conduct that work ?

*T.* We shall, as nearly as possible, teach in the spirit of the lessons which we have so often heard you give.

*P.* And what do you conceive to be the main object in all my lessons ?

*T.* We conceive your object to be two-fold.

1st. By a judicious selection, to place before the children such facts, events, and phenomena as, with your assistance, will be sure to interest them ; to awaken curiosity and a desire to learn more than they already know about them ; to lead them, by skilful questioning, to find out for themselves all that the exercise of their own understandings can bring forth ; to supply the material for those gaps which their own unassisted faculties could not otherwise fill ; and lastly, to raise them to a capacity of distinguishing for themselves, amid all the calls for action and self-restraint on the part of man, what conduct ought to be classed as good, as indifferent, and as bad, and why.

2nd. Progressively as the children learn to recognize the different characters of conduct, to bring to bear upon them all the influences of affection, of respect, of example, and of imi-



tation, so as to evoke in them an earnest desire to practise the conduct which they approve, to eschew the conduct which they condemn, and to turn their thoughts in upon the laws of their own being—upon their own constitution, physical and moral; so that, knowing how much they, in common with all others, are the creatures of habit, they may resolutely strive, by the exercise of that self-discipline for which there is no substitute, to become the kind of men that they love and respect, and to avoid growing into the kind which they cannot but hate and fear or despise, qualified as their detestation may be by pity.

*P.* Going to your school-work animated with these sentiments, I may congratulate you beforehand upon your success. You will, of course, be prepared to encounter numerous instances of failure and disappointment. If these beset people in every walk of life, how little can the schoolmaster expect to escape, he being engaged in a work more behind the advanced knowledge of the age than any other that I can think of. Should those debased creatures of whom we have spoken persevere in characterizing your proceedings as unchristian or irreligious, their imputations need not disturb you. Silent contempt, not unminged with pity, is the utmost that most of them deserve.

Here and there, you say, some of them can and will throw hindrances in your way. These hindrances must be faced; but they need not be magnified. Full often they are rather hindrances in appearance than in reality, and only effect their purpose by acting upon the fears of the cowards whom it is wished to obstruct. That infamous practice of hurling what is miscalled religion on the rail, to bring the education-train to a stand, or to upset it, will not alarm the intelligent engineer, nor even induce him to shut off his steam. He knows that he has but to deal with a fog-signal about to yield with an explosion under his wheel.

Nor should you conceal from yourselves that more powerful and dangerous opponents may cross your path. But ought they to make you turn aside from your duty, or only inspire you with

more determination, and call forth resources which but for the emergency might remain dormant within you? The faithful servant, bound on a confidential mission to some distant part, never loses sight of the object of his journey. Floods may make him deviate from his beaten track, or shift from his carriage to a boat. Or, if robbers infest the road, he will form his plan for beating them off or for circumventing them, whichever is least likely to interfere with the early and safe execution of his trust.

## ON THEOLOGICO-MORALITY.



*T.* We have often heard you speak most hopefully of the prospects of a future improved state of well-being for the great mass of the people. We would gladly participate in this hopefulness more largely than we do; but we cannot divest ourselves of a suspicion that there are difficulties in the way of realizing your hopes, the means for removing which yet remain to be pointed out, assuming that they are to be found.

*P.* You are still a little faint-hearted. You fear that the fruits of the education which you are giving, and of the better education which, after more experience, may be given, will not quite come up to my expectation.

*T.* You are not doing us justice. We have full faith in what would be the effect of universal education like unto what you propose for infants and children, if we could but see our way to its being given. But when we reflect upon the wonderful advances in every other work to which man has put his hand, compared with those which he has made in education, we doubt whether you can have taken into account all the difficulties in the way of that work, granting, as we believe we may, that no over-estimate has been made of its capabilities for bringing about the improvements which you look forward to.

*P.* We understand one another sufficiently to make it unnecessary to go over in detail the particulars of the education which we believe might be given, and which we are desirous of assisting to impart to every human being. It comprises instruction in the duties of life and a course of discipline adapted to secure a ready and zealous performance of those

duties. We contend that education answering to this description is not given; and that, if it were, the larger part of the destitution which afflicts this generation would cease to afflict our posterity.

*T.* And now we wish to be satisfied whether all the difficulties which have prevented and are preventing the diffusion of an education calculated to lead to such a result have been stated, or whether there must not be others much less easy to overcome which we have not yet adverted to.

*P.* To judge of this, ought we not to be thoroughly acquainted with the kind of persons who principally preside over the education of this country, and determine its tone and character? What would your reply be to inquirers wishing to obtain such knowledge?

*T.* We think we should say that education in this country was mostly under the influence of the clergy. They seem to preside over our chief colleges and universities, to be the masters of most of our endowed and proprietary schools, and if not the principals of our training colleges, to appoint them, as well as the masters of our national schools. The influence of their clergy over the education of the various dissenting bodies may not be so apparent, but we suspect that it is, if possible, more felt.

*P.* Adopting an expression which will enable us to speak of all shades of religious opinion together, whether in the Established Church or among dissenters, will you allow me to state that you think the theological element is the one which exercises the strongest influence over the education of the people, infant and adult, and especially over that part of education which gives a form to character and intelligence, as manifested in the performance of social duties?

*T.* Whether that influence be, in your estimation, for good or for evil, we see no reason to doubt that the theological is by far the most powerful of all the influences at work to form the moral character of the people, which of course is to be judged by what are seen to be the objects of desire among them,

and the means resorted to for the purpose of obtaining those objects.

*P.* Would it be rash to attempt to form a judgment upon the merits of any prevailing education, without being informed of the manners, customs, and modes of living which flourish along with it?

*T.* It would; for although other influences besides those of education may be at work to give a direction to manners, customs, and modes of living, no single influence can be so strong as that of the education of the home, the school, and the pulpit, in combination.

*P.* And how are we to form a judgment upon the various manners, customs, and modes of living, whether comparing the present with the past, or those of one nation with another?

*T.* A comparison between the different states of well-being, between the different supplies of food, raiment, shelter, and means of recreation, as well as the states of health and duration of life, would be our first step towards forming such a judgment. Although differences of position and climate are not without their influence, wherever we saw superiority of well-being we should expect to find superiority of character. Besides, we would follow the course which we pursue in teaching our boys. Once accustomed to trace back from effects to causes, and forward from causes to effects, we could not fail to trace, where position and climate were similar, the different effects referable to differences of industry, intelligence, skill, economy, sobriety, trustworthiness, and parental forethought. And, lastly, we would compare the most favourable state of well-being of which thus far we have had experience with that better state which we believe to be attainable, and try to work out what advances in intelligence and changes in manners, habits, and modes of living would assist us to this better future state.

*P.* I need not ask the question. I may assume that you are not disposed to rest satisfied with the state of well-being to which we have attained thus far, nor with the intelligence,

manners, customs, and modes of living which preceded, if they did not cause it, nor even with the manners and habits, improved as they are generally admitted to be, now prevalent.

*T.* We are quite prepared to admit our want of entire satisfaction with the intelligence, manners, customs, and modes of living that have so far prevailed, and to state our conviction that they have not only preceded but caused a large part of the destitution so generally deplored. If we examine the conduct which is mixed up with this destitution, do we not see drunkenness, ignorance, brutality, dishonesty, child-neglect, and that foulest of all the blots on our manhood, "the social evil"? We may meet with people who doubt the possibility of so improving intelligence and morals as to greatly diminish destitution and its evil accompaniments, but nobody doubts that the diminution would be brought about were the improvement effected.

*P.* According to you, then, the difficulty to be solved is, whether intelligence and morals can be greatly improved; for in proportion as they are improved, that is, in proportion as we get rid of drunkenness, brutality, child-neglect, and the social evil, destitution, the inevitable accompaniment of all these, will disappear.

*T.* That seems to us to be the difficulty.

*P.* If we can put our fingers upon a great impediment in the way of imparting intelligence and morals—an impediment not generally recognized, but easily removed when once recognized—may we not consider that we have at least made one step towards solving the difficulty?

*T.* Certainly; and a most important one too.

*P.* Have we not in reality done something more? Do we not acknowledge that education is greatly subjected to theological influence? and have we not satisfied ourselves of the causes which have retarded and still retard the progress of theologico-intelligence?

*T.* We cannot deny that you have pointed out to our entire satisfaction the causes which have made the intelligence of

theologians lag behind the general intelligence, repressed as that has been by the influence exercised over education by theologians; but these causes ought not to be difficult of removal. It appears to us, however, that the indifference in acting up to what intelligence, imperfect as it is, clearly recommends, is a greater impediment in the way of social improvement than even our short-comings in intelligence.

*P.* If I do not misunderstand you, it is your opinion that although much human misery is occasioned by want of intelligence, much more is attributable to a laxity of conduct, by no means pleasant to confess, but too plain to be denied.

*T.* And the laxity of conduct on which our thoughts are just now fixed is not that conduct in a comparatively few which defies the will of society, whether recorded in laws or gathered from public opinion, but that conduct which habitually and all but universally disregards the plainest injunctions of religion as professed. Some people denounce this discrepancy between conduct and profession as hypocrisy. But to us it appears like a deep-seated habit too strong to be resisted, while its mastery is unperceived; whereas hypocrisy can only be imputed, with propriety, to those who are conscious of their inconsistency and untruthfulness. Nevertheless, it is a disorder, whether intellectual, moral or religious, which greatly obstructs improvement; and we should indeed rejoice if you could explain to us how it was contracted, and how it is to be cured.

*P.* I fear I can do little more than take part in your inquiry. We may help one another to points of view whence to observe, raised above some of the considerations which tend to conceal the principal subject of inquiry, and to confuse inquirers. The entanglement, after all, may rather be in our thoughts than inherent in the subject. Let us have before us what it is that we seem to understand thoroughly—to have no doubt about; and what we wish further to learn or to clear up. In our present state of knowledge, imperfect as it is, there is much to be thankful for, much to make us hopeful of learning more,

and of turning what we have learned to better account, despite our doubts and perplexities. Man has reached firm standing ground, whence to prosecute his further inquiries, when he has risen to the capacity of judging conduct according to its tendency to promote well-being, and character according to its tendency to insure good conduct. There are difficulties enough, even with the advantages of the wider range, and of the opportunities of more undisturbed inspection afforded by the unbroken view from this standing ground. For, let us ask, are all the men who admit that conduct ought to be judged by this standard of one mind as to the particular kinds—the rules of conduct which most deserve to be approved?

*T.* They certainly are not; although, whether we look at the course of modern legislation, or at the current of public opinion, we may observe a nearer approach than formerly to uniformity and coherence, both in our legal and extra-legal judgments—a result clearly attributable to the growing practice of estimating conduct by its tendency to promote or disturb well-being.

*P.* After the acquisition of a principle or test whereby to judge conduct, it is still possible that we may err in applying it. But to know a principle about which there can be no doubt, to have been able, by its help, to emancipate ourselves from former prejudices and superstitions, to introduce order into our investigations, and to lighten our darkness, is a guarantee that perseverance will overcome all future difficulties, and clear up all remaining perplexities.

*T.* Might we not say that moral science, through the application of this principle, has been extricated from chaos, much as astronomical science was by the discovery and application of the principle of gravitation?

*P.* Perhaps we might. But we have as much to do in applying our grand principle to the elucidation of morals, as the astronomers have in applying their grand principle to its purposes—possibly more. Can we say that moralists or inquirers into conduct are as nearly agreed in their judgments upon acts, and upon the men who perform them, as astronomers



are in judging of the positions and movements of the heavenly bodies ?

*T.* No. They certainly have not yet approached that unanimity.

*P.* When two conflicting judgments upon conduct have been arrived at by two sets of inquirers, what means are available for ascertaining which of the two is the better judgment, or whether some error is not mixed up with them both ? Supposing past authorities, and learning, industry, and sagacity in studying them, to have done their utmost, and in vain, to predetermine what conduct is good and what conduct is bad, is no light, no aid, no correction procurable from any other quarter ?

*T.* There is one resource still remaining. Each judgment, as exemplified in conduct, may be tested. The acts flowing from it, sanctioned or recommended by it, may be watched and examined. The consequences of the acts, accurately traced, will confirm or condemn the judgment which had previously classed them.

*P.* Would this opportunity for testing the correctness of conflicting judgments be readily found, if people were careless to make conduct conform to judgments pronounced and recorded, and thereby presumed to be accepted as believed in and to be acted upon ?

*T.* Scarcely ; at all events, not so readily as if people were careful. In fact, it is not unreasonable to suppose that much of the improvement in conduct that we have to rejoice in has arisen from the sight of what is distressing and unsatisfactory, from the desire of preventing its recurrence and from reflecting upon the causes which may have occasioned it.

*P.* It is suspected by some people that the improvements in man's conduct, as regards his fellow men, have not kept pace with his improved conduct in all other respects. We may, perhaps, do something towards satisfying ourselves whether this suspicion be warranted, and if it be, how it has happened that man's conduct towards his fellow men should have lagged behind his other conduct, by examining the course of pro-

ceedings through which some of his improvements or successes appear to have been accomplished. If I were to examine his conduct as a cultivator of the land, how might we infer that he had reached to his present comparative superiority?

*T.* By trying new methods, some recommended by others, and others suggested by himself, persevering with those that answered, rejecting those that failed.

*P.* How has he proceeded in bringing about those remarkable improvements made of late years in transport and inter-communication?

*T.* In the same manner; and many of the details have been preserved to us of the trials, of the hopes and fears, that accompanied the experiments, and of the failures and disappointments. The improvements upon improvements which have resulted from them are in daily use.

*P.* What has been his course of action in mining, in smelting, and in the various processes of manufacture?

*T.* Much the same.

*P.* Has man's progress in all these lines been the result of efforts to increase his producing powers?

*T.* We think we may say that it has. For when he has hit upon anything new, as it were, by accident, it has depended upon his observation and intelligence to hold by it as worth preserving, or to abandon it as worthless as an agent of increased production.

*P.* Which, in your opinion, would be the more correct representation of man's conduct in carrying out his industrial works: to say that he endeavoured to frame a course of action for his guidance, to lay down precise and definite rules by which to abide till better advised, or that he was altogether indifferent about well-defined plans and rules?

*T.* To say the latter would be obviously untrue. His industrial career has been one of continued effort, and particularly of late years, to contrive and design improved processes; to specify them minutely and accurately; to reduce them to practice with the utmost care and precision; to note the

results, and then to adopt or reject, partly or wholly, according to the estimate of the results, and of the means which contributed to produce them.

*P.* Does it appear to you that man would have attained to his present state of efficiency in industrial work had he been slatternly in his designs and plans, inexact in his descriptions, ambiguous and confused in his expressions, and careless both to understand and to execute the work thus imperfectly prepared?

*T.* We do not see how he could possibly have risen to his present state of efficiency by any such ill-advised modes of proceeding. Definite and intelligible plans, accurately expressed, are indispensable auxiliaries for executing well what has been well conceived, and for correcting mishaps and oversights.

*P.* I always become timid and anxious, while inquiring into rules of conduct, if I deviate from the ways of the administrators of our great works. I long to verify as I go along, for fear of drifting into some of those phantom-like rules which beguile the judgment and misdirect conduct. Modern industrial works present to us opportunities for observing systematized courses of action, the study of which may throw much light upon the causes which obstruct improvement in non-industrial conduct—improvement so desperately needed for the advancement of well-being, and so earnestly looked for by intelligent and religious men. You will not object to search with me for means of testing, of verifying or correcting the conclusions which we are disposed to adopt. If we were to make inquiry upon one of our large modern farms, what notions should we be likely to bring away concerning the method of conducting its tillage?

*T.* That the whole course of cultivation was systematically thought over and laid out by the farmer, that able heads and hands under him were engaged in executing his orders, and also in suggesting improvements, while younger and less experienced men were working and learning under them; accurate accounts being kept of the courses of cropping, of the number and condition of the stock, of the instruments of agriculture; and lastly,

of the expenditure and receipts, so as to ascertain how far the balance of profit corresponded with what had been anticipated.

*P.* Could not a thoroughly capable farmer cultivate his farm successfully without troubling himself with these elaborate details ?

*T.* We doubt whether any farmer who did not so trouble himself could be thoroughly capable. The tangle of the details unattended to and ill-arranged would, we fancy, trouble him more than he need trouble himself by attending to reduce them to order. It is by the careful watching of the execution of his plans, and of the carrying out of his intentions, that he is able to detect where his expenditure and pains have been misapplied, where new suggestions may be tried with hope of advantage, and how, in fine, the best results in respect of profit may be obtained from the system in actual operation, or how that system may be more fully carried out or corrected, or partially superseded.

*P.* If from the farmer we were to turn to the builder of some of our modern large steam-vessels, what might we learn from him ?

*T.* That every step of his work is preceded by an exact conception of the end to which it is destined. The dimensions and structure of the ship being first designed, so as to adapt it for the employment prepared for it, the details down to their minutest parts are specified with scrupulous accuracy. In some cases, deviations are purposely introduced as improvements during the progress of the work ; but mostly, the plans are executed as originally designed, the improvements, if any are suggested during the execution or after the completion of the work in hand, being adopted in the next.

*P.* Is a similar course followed in conducting the business of a factory, of a counting-house, of a railway, of a dock ?

*T.* Similar in spirit, although varied in form.

*P.* Is this observable in the proceedings of all—that a definite course of action is laid down, that the results of this course, in all its parts and in its entirety, are watched and

noted, that deviations from it, expected to be improvements, are tried from time to time, and persevered in or abandoned according as they stand the test of trial ?

*T.* It is—at least in the proceedings of those who conduct their business successfully. One might safely say that in all cases where failure occurs, it is attributable to negligence in following out this course, or to the want of capacity to understand and adopt it. In the more numerous cases where failure is avoided, the success of each may be seen to be in proportion to the intelligence with which the wisdom of this course is apprehended, and the fidelity with which it is followed out. The result to mankind is the continuous addition which has been made, particularly of late years, to the means of enjoyment, and which, with right conduct in other respects, might be accessible to all.

*P.* Are there any persons whose special vocation it is to lay down rules for this “conduct in other respects,” in which, I suppose, you include the conduct of man to man—to notify what must be done, what may be done or left undone, and what must not be done, and to give a tone to the desires and aspirations and efforts in regard to that conduct, much in the same way as administrators of capital guide and direct conduct in their several industrial establishments ?

*T.* Our law-makers and the functionaries who expound and apply the laws, and, where necessary, enforce obedience to them, are the parties who seem to come nearest to administrators of capital in exercising direct control over the conduct of others. Their efforts are aided, and we might also say supplemented, by the whole body of teachers—teachers of adults and infants, whether from the pulpit, the professor’s chair, or in the schoolroom.

*P.* Trying to comprise all those parties under two heads, let us say that legislators and teachers do for conduct in general what administrators of capital do for special conduct. How may we characterize the ends or objects towards which they are desirous of directing conduct ?

*T.* Legislators and teachers are desirous, or at least ought to be desirous, of directing conduct, so as to make it promote the general well-being. Administrators of capital are striving indirectly towards the same end, directly to produce abundance of wealth.

*P.* How do legislators stand a comparison with administrators of capital in regard to the definiteness and appositeness of the rules which they have devised for accomplishing their purpose ?

*T.* We think the pre-eminence must be awarded to administrators of capital. From the smallest up to the largest of their undertakings—from fitting us with clothes, and providing us with furniture, up to the means of transport and communication on their present grand scale—they seem to surpass anything that we could have expected, and to be continually improving upon former methods. Legislators of late years have certainly come much nearer to their rivals ; and if we could banish from our minds all recollection of the foolish, contradictory, oppressive, and inhuman laws, from which we have but just been relieved, we might not so readily rank legislators below administrators of capital.

*P.* Can you account for the comparative want of success which has attended the efforts of legislators ? Is their work more difficult ?

*T.* It is generally considered to be so ; but then the individuals to whom the work is assigned are supposed to be more instructed and capable men.

*P.* Do we find that our grander and more difficult industrial works are less successfully executed than our smaller and easier ?

*T.* No ; and, as your question implies, that ought to make us suspect that the comparative want of success in our legislators must be traceable to some other cause than the difficulty of their work.

*P.* Administrators of capital, we are agreed, have always been intent upon devising and applying the means best adapted

to accomplish a special purpose. Working in this state of mind, they have not only attained to a certain amount of success, but have been steadily improving upon previous success. Have legislators been doing their work in a similar state of mind?

*T.* We think that they are working in this state of mind now. Hence our greatly improved laws. Their former inferiority to administrators of capital may be attributed to their want of any well-defined purpose, or to shifting, mistaken, and conflicting purposes—whence many of the laws were dictated by passion, caprice, prejudice and superstition.

*P.* And how do you conceive that modern legislators have been able to extricate themselves from the chaos of stupid, ferocious, contradictory, and capricious laws which they inherited from their predecessors?

*T.* By their participation in the gradually advancing intelligence; but more particularly by their having grasped the idea that all laws ought to be so framed as to promote the general well-being, and that existing laws, where not so framed, should be repealed or so modified as to adapt them to that purpose. It appears to us, so far as we are able to judge, that the tone of the debates which have preceded and accompanied the changes in our laws of late years, as well as the changes themselves, bear out the accuracy of our representation.

*P.* I doubt whether any intelligent man at all conversant with the history of the last forty years would dispute either your facts or your inferences. There may be grave differences of opinion as to what further changes are desirable in our laws; but we are all of one mind that our laws, criminal and civil, commercial and financial, and our system of procedure have been altered within that period, so as to be much more efficient in conducing to the general well-being, and that the alterations have been made with that intention. Legislators, we have agreed, may do much to promote the general well-being, but they cannot do all that is needful to secure it. Even what they will do must depend upon their inclinations

and intelligence. Moreover, a large part of the well-being of society must be the result of individual acts over which legislatures are incapable of exercising direct control. This brings us to the consideration of what our teachers have done and are doing for us. How will they stand a comparison with legislators and administrators of capital? Do they top both, or do they lag behind legislators, as legislators lag behind administrators of capital?

*T.* That question is more easily proposed than answered.

*P.* Your remark would apply to many other questions which, nevertheless, it is desirable should be proposed, and, if possible, answered also. Does it not interest us greatly to learn whether our teachers are doing all that ought to be expected of them, whether their efforts are impeded by influences beyond their control, or whether they are impeding the efforts of others?

*T.* It certainly does, although we do not see our way to forming an opinion upon the subject. We might fancy that teachers and legislators are much on a par, seeing, as you say, that the efforts of legislators depend much upon their inclinations and intelligence; and these, it may be presumed, are greatly influenced by their teachers.

*P.* When you say "greatly" influenced, do you not mean "wholly" influenced?

*T.* No. For we cannot shut our eyes to what is called the influence of circumstances. Great discoveries and the applications of them—gunpowder, the magnet, steam, electricity, and the speculations of such men as Bacon, Newton, Locke, Adam Smith, and Bentham—have acted upon legislators to strengthen or counteract the tendencies derived from their teachers.

*P.* You ought to be greatly encouraged to persevere in your inquiry, for you have already hit upon a suggestion that may help you through your difficulties. Have teachers done their best to prepare legislators and others to profit by new lights and powers when they come, and even to look for their coming;



or have they done much to raise up an indisposition to accept them, and, still more, to look for them ?

*T.* The severe and protracted struggles which have preceded the acceptance of new truths, the repeal of absurd and abominable laws, and the abandonment of degrading superstitions might make us suspect that the efforts of teachers have not hitherto been directed very vigorously in preparing pupils' minds to expect and look for new truths, and to welcome and appreciate their arrival ; unless, indeed, there be something so repugnant in the displacement of error by truth, of superstition and prejudice by religion and sense, that but for the efforts of our teachers the displacement could never be effected.

*P.* I think we have agreed that our teaching, or at all events the systematic and professional part of it, is principally in the hands and under the influence of theologians. If we were justified in the estimate which we formed of theologico-intelligence, can we say that they have been favouring the dissemination of light and truth, or must we admit that they have been obstructing it as much as teachers can who, while limiting their instruction to the past, cannot entirely shut out glimpses of the present and the future ?

*T.* The impression which has abided with us from our former conversations certainly is that the thought of encouraging a spirit of cautious and yet searching inquiry is not uppermost in the minds of our teachers. Research into the past, holding fast by what is found there, and fidelity of reproduction, are the chief employments of youth under theological guidance.

*P.* Exercises not to be despised, if associated with that spirit of inquiry which keeps on the look-out for new truths and the correction of past errors, otherwise tending to strengthen persistency in prejudice, superstition, and misconduct. And we have now to consider whether they have been so associated. Let us return for a moment to some of our former inquiries. Have they not brought us to form a judg-

ment upon the proper mode of dealing both with conduct and opinions at variance with the prevailing wishes and feelings of society ?

*T.* They have. We agreed that society ought to be tolerant of opinions in which it does not concur, or more, that it ought to foster the disposition to inquire, and to sanction freedom of expression and discussion, not because it can wish or ought to be indifferent among conflicting doctrines, but because all experience has shown us how much past folly and error, mistaken at the time for wisdom and truth, we have had to get rid of, and has led us to suspect that all the zeal for inquiry and fearlessness in utterance which can be mustered, will not be more than enough to accomplish our release from other follies and errors still lurking in disguise among us.

*P.* And looking to our houses of parliament for evidence of the spirit in which our legislators are inclined to deal with conduct and opinions deviating from the received standard of good and true, what appears to you to be the prevailing tone there ?

*T.* Intolerance of conduct, with a steady improvement in capacity of discrimination between good and bad, through the growing practice of estimating conduct by its tendency to promote well-being ; and tolerance of opinions, year by year more general, from the persuasion that our security for retaining the means of well-being of which we are possessed, and for obtaining the further means of well-being so urgently needed, depends greatly upon fearlessness of expression as well as of inquiry.

*P.* When you describe our legislators as intolerant of conduct, do you mean that they strive to repress by law all the conduct of which they disapprove ?

*T.* No. While they repress some, they leave much to be frowned upon and discountenanced by public opinion, instructed and exhorted by teachers in the schools and from the pulpits.

*P.* And do teachers imitate legislators in their dealings with conduct and opinions ?

*T.* We are hardly prepared to answer that question. We are inclined to think that they agree with legislators in denouncing bad conduct, but we doubt whether they are as tolerant of differences of opinion.

*P.* Legislators refrain from pronouncing all bad acts to be criminal, fearing to diminish rather than to increase well-being were they to make the attempt. What dependence may we place upon our teachers for procuring exemption from that bad conduct which has not been pronounced criminal? What is the general scope of the teachings and preachings, so far as they bear directly upon conduct?

*T.* They may not be the best conceivable; but you would not deny to our teachers the merit of aiming in the right direction.

*P.* Ought we not to look for something more? Should we be treating our teachers with much respect if we did not give them credit for doing their best, in common with administrators of capital and legislators, to promote the general well-being?

*T.* We should not. Doubtless they are generally doing their best, and would do more if they knew how.

*P.* And we are not justified in affirming that they might do more, if we cannot point out where they fall short of what is required and may be done. Intolerance of bad conduct, of the commission of acts, or of the omission to perform them, where human misery must be the consequence of either, ought to characterize a teacher as much as a legislator. Now, may we not say that child-neglect is of all non-criminal bad conduct the very worst?

*T.* That we have already admitted, and we see no reason for retracting our admission. But, surely, you do not mean that teachers sanction child-neglect?

*P.* You never heard a sermon, a discourse, or a lesson, in which it was justified. You have heard many in which it was rebuked. But acts, not words—conduct, not profession—must guide our judgments in deciding what it is that people are in

earnest to discourage or to promote. Have you ever heard vain display and luxurious living in the midst of destitution sanctioned from the pulpit ?

*T.* Never. But we have heard the very reverse. Even the accumulation of riches, through which the propensity to display and indulge may be gratified, is severely reprobated.

*P.* Granting that child-neglect and vain display and profusion of expense are alike condemned in words, are they alike condemned in conduct ?

*T.* We dare not say that they are. The prevalence of vain display and profuse expenditure in the midst of so much suffering preventable by a judicious application of the very wealth misapplied, is the saddest of all the sad spectacles for the good and the thoughtful to contemplate.

*P.* Are the men who are most conspicuous in this sinful course of life shunned by those whose special vocation it is to preach down and to live down sin ? Do our teachers turn their backs upon those hardened sinners who parade their disregard of the most obvious duties ? Do they warn off the young and the uncontaminated from contact with this moral leprosy ?

*T.* It appears to us that the clergy of all denominations act much like other men. They are quite as eager to obtain wealth, quite as fond of display, and, so far from shunning the society of those who are foremost in gorgeous living, they court it. Among the clergy, as among other men, are to be found many who greatly disapprove and rigidly eschew so sinful a course of life. But the proportion of those who avail themselves of every opportunity to get wealth, and to spend it profusely, seems to be about the same as that which is to be found in other classes.

*P.* When you institute a comparison between teachers and other classes, you must not forget that, while in all individuals there must necessarily be points of conduct in which all are nearly on a level as men, there are also to be found points in which individuals of each class are above the individuals of all

other classes. The pre-eminence of scavengers who remove the filth from our streets, of the police who keep ruffians from our homes, of soldiers who defend us from invasion, of sailors who brave the dangers of the seas, of doctors and nurses who attend the sick, of farmers, merchants, manufacturers, and carriers, who each in their own line perform some special work for society, is undoubted. You have pointed out where our clergy are on a level with other men ; wherein are they pre-eminent ?

*T.* They are at least pre-eminent in ecclesiastical and theological learning.

*P.* You do not say that they are pre-eminent in teaching good conduct, either by precept or example. Am I to conclude that the teachers to whom is confided the cultivation and propagation of extra-legal good conduct, whose vocation it ought to be to denounce, to repress, and at least to discountenance bad conduct, are tolerant of it ?

*T.* Are you not generalizing somewhat unwarrantably ?

*P.* You hesitate to answer the question as I have shaped it. I will try to modify it so as to enable you to give your verdict. Are the moulders of the extra-legal conduct of mankind tolerant of the worst of all the extra-legal kinds of bad conduct ?

*T.* We must confess that they are not so intolerant as we could wish to see them.

*P.* You still hold back. You are still reluctant to deliver your verdict. If we were not mistaken in our opinion formerly expressed—that good conduct is an essential in the character of a Christian, and that child-neglect is a very grave case of misconduct—what ought to be our judgment of the efficiency of so-called Christian teachers, if we find them remiss in preaching against that sin and in pointing out its enormity, or lukewarm and faint-hearted in rebuking sinners, especially wealthy sinners ?

*T.* We should be obliged to admit that they ill performed their sacred functions.

*P.* We can conceive of a race of Christian teachers finding themselves in a state of society similar to our own, and holding

a position in it equivalent to that of our clerical dignitaries, who might differ from them very greatly in their conduct. What would be the effect upon society if, quitting their own palatial residences, they proclaimed their inability to enjoy peace of mind within them, or to interchange hospitality with the magnates of the land, till efficient measures had been taken for providing that no child should be left untrained and untaught? Would not the rich quail before them if they preached to others, and bore testimony to the sincerity of their belief, in deed as well as in word, that the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, escape from eternal torment, was no more to be hoped for by the resident of a mansion who closed his eyes obdurately to the claims of infancy than by the witness who perjured himself in a court of law?

*T.* We don't know how this mode of pleading the cause and asserting the claims of children would be received by the rich and powerful, but it would thoroughly exculpate Christian teachers from all suspicion of hollowness in their professions, or of indifference to the most flagrant of sins while preaching against it. Nobody would dare to say that Christianity was a sham in the face of such teaching. You should adhere to your own nomenclature. Preachers and teachers who preach, teach, and act in this way ought not to be confounded with those who preach, teach, and act differently. The first may be looked up to as Christian moralists. But no higher title can be bestowed upon the latter than theologico-moralists.

*P.* As we are of one mind that "morality proper" means a systematic collection of rules of conduct, by which all individuals should be brought to abide, in order, if possible, to promote, and, certainly, not to disturb, the general well-being, what special duty would you assign to teachers in connection with morality, and what qualifications would you insist upon their being possessed of?

*T.* It is, of course, their special duty to teach morality, to induce to conduct in conformity with its rules, and where manners, habits, and misinterpretations of religion have set up

non-conformity, to wear from those malpractices, for such they may be called. The qualifications for the performance of this duty, obviously, are a thorough knowledge of moral rules, and aptitude in expounding, illustrating, and recommending them, combined with that personal bearing which gives weight to appeals, exhortations, remonstrances, or denunciations, as occasion may call for them.

*P.* Have teachers hitherto had to perform their duties in a state of society where morality is generally understood as we understand it, and is practised as well as professed?

*T.* Our confession must be that they have not. History and contemporary practice teem with examples of the sanction of conduct diametrically opposed to what modern enlightenment accepts as moral, as well as of conduct no less opposed to the morality professed.

*P.* How would you judge of teachers who, finding their lot cast in such a state of society, task themselves, not to awaken sinners to the errors of their ways, but to adapt their teaching by suppression, interpolation, and mystification, so as to make the rules of morality appear to justify sinful practices?

*T.* Such teachers would be corruptors rather than purifiers of society.

*P.* Did you ever hear of directors of large industrial concerns who, instead of keeping clear and accurate accounts, have, for the purposes of temporary gain, falsified them, or, as it has been termed, "cooked them," or "made them pleasant," introducing so much of confusion as would hide the indications of future bankruptcy, under a show of large profits in the form of immediate dividends?

*T.* We have; although we do not see the drift of your question.

*P.* Which would you condemn as the viler malefactors: directors of industrial concerns who cooked their accounts, or religious teachers who cooked the rules of morality so as to reconcile sinners to persevere in enjoyments incompatible with general well-being?

*T.* We now see the drift of your former question. But you should not call such teachers "religious teachers."

*P.* In the midst of the torpor, the tendency to repose in the past which distinguishes ecclesiastics, there is one sign reassuring for humanity. Some of their number, ever and anon, seem to wake up from the general slumber, and show that the spirit of inquiry, the love of truth and courage in proclaiming it, although rare, are not quite extinct in the ecclesiastical mind. The kind of obstacles from their own brethren which they have to struggle against will best be understood by running your eyes over the string of imputations, innuendos, and invectives to be met with in one of the most remarkable of the onslaughts that have been made on some of their late attempts to awaken their less sensible brethren to the inconsistencies, incoherencies, and immoralities heedlessly clung to by professing Christians, to the great detriment of society and of Christianity also.

"Infidelity," "atheism," "irreligiousness," "violation of professional fitness," "criminal levity," "laxity," "daring flippancy," "animosity," "abandonment of all Christian doctrine," "stammering, equivocating, and dishonest subscription," figure among the imputations with which they are profusely bespattered. Next, there are reproaches mixed with sneers at their position as "unhappy clergymen," as "honest men and believers in Christianity," avowing doctrines which are characterized as "sceptical, metaphysical speculations, incompatible with the Bible and the Christian faith," unfit for "clerical lips," and scrutinizing "propositions hitherto received with reverent submission." The gravamen of all the offences committed by these would-be inquirers into, and improvers and purifiers of, Christianity, as interpreted by comparative barbarians, in the eyes of their clerical brethren, is the "remorseless application of criticism," the "free handling of sacred subjects," as if real Christianity were as little capable of surviving criticism as their misrepresentations of it. Lastly, there is the attempt to frighten away inquirers by denunciations



of the "pride of reason," something much more heinous, I suppose, in their estimation than the "pride of stupidity." This "pride of reason," it appears, begets an offspring still more odious than itself, since "the spiritual child of the rationalist develops into the atheist," and thrives in a "haze cast by vanity, love of novelty, and the pride of intellect."

What are we to think of a church which thus welcomes attempts at internal improvement among its own members, besides denouncing those who make them as hypocrites for abiding in a church which they hope to "rationalize," and threatening exposure and expulsion unless retreat anticipate the punishment so richly merited by "remorseless rationalism"?

*T.* One would think that the men who can resort to such substitutes for "rationalism" as you have collected were bent upon extinguishing, rather than upon improving, the church of which they are members.

*P.* They certainly succeed in satisfying us that there are human beings whose liability to be charged with "rationalism" is very remote. There is nothing rational about them. But while we grieve to think how completely they show that the description "*Homo est animal rationale*" has its exceptions, and make us exclaim "*Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat*," we must try and gather strength and wisdom by studying the causes which lead to such weakness and folly. If they cannot teach us what we ought to do, may not their example shew us what we ought to avoid?

*T.* You would use them as the Spartans of old used their drunken Helots.

*P.* The Spartans, it is said, made their Helots drunk, in order that the disgusting spectacle might deter their young men from indulging in strong drinks. Do you think that I wish to make anybody irrational for my purposes?

*T.* We are sure you don't. Neither is it necessary. Theologians seem determined to keep you over supplied with examples of what ought to be avoided.

P. With the examples before us of the reception given by ecclesiastics to those of their brethren who have been awakened to a sense of the misconceptions and misrepresentations of the scope of revelation, and of the misapplications of its teachings derived from barbarous ages, do you think your own lot is so much worse than that of others who share with you in the enjoyment of intelligence, and in the consciousness of being keepers of their own souls?

T. No : we must admit that a thinking ecclesiastic is more cruelly dealt by even than we are.

P. Do you suppose that the inquiries in which we have been engaged, the conclusions at which we have arrived, and the line of conduct which we are marking out for ourselves, would receive the countenance and encouragement of ecclesiastics who can bestow such scurrilous treatment upon their own brethren?

T. Any mildness of language that they might condescend to in characterizing our speculations and projects, would only be for the sake of contrast to the severe terms in which they speak of their own "erring brothers."

P. The "erring brothers" you mention, who have lately been endeavouring—whether wisely or not I will not venture to say—to make faith and reason coincide, have drawn forth replies from those whose motto is "*stare super antiquas vias*;" and a bishop has written a preface to certify to the clergy, and to all who cannot and dare not think for themselves, that these replies are free from all traces of "rationalism." Let us examine how far his notions of morality coincide with ours. Here is an introductory specimen of his style of treating those who, in thinking for themselves, think differently from him:—"These difficulties gather their strength from a spirit of lawless rejection of all authority, from a daring claim for the unassisted human intellect to be able to discover, measure, and explain all things. The rejection of the faith, which, in the last age, assumed the coarse and vulgar features of an open Atheism, which soon destroyed itself in its own multiply-

us that we should be unjust to other theologians if we did not distinguish him from the common herd. Theologico-morality scarcely suffices to mark this bishop's deviation from true morality. His morality merits the appellation of "Episcopomorality."

*P.* As I believe that, when child-neglect ceases to be tolerated, most other kinds of bad conduct will be greatly diminished, or disappear altogether, I will not cite examples of any other kinds, except so far as they may happen to be included among cases of bad conduct in regard to freedom of opinion and expression. We have agreed that it is one of the most important of moral duties to encourage, not merely the tolerance, but the cultivation of habits of freedom of thought and expression as the mainstays of integrity and candour, the conservators of knowledge, the correctors of error, and the pioneers of improvement and progress. How do the clergy of all denominations stand before the world as promoters of openness of disposition, non-concealment of thought, ardour in the search of truth, confession of doubt and difficulty of belief, and even of dissent? Are they as tolerant of freedom of thought and expression as they are of conduct which is adverse to well-being, and which ought, accordingly, to be regarded by them as irreligious and unchristian?

*T.* They are not. Indeed, there is a fundamental difficulty in their way. A church, a sect, a denomination, without a distinguishing doctrine, is inconceivable.

*P.* But have you not agreed that freedom of thought and of expression ought to be cultivated for the sake of progressive well-being? If you hold to that opinion, must you not also admit that the attempt to chain down mankind to a predetermined set of doctrines, regardless of the calls that may arise from within to modify or reject them, is detrimental to well-being?

*T.* Efforts ought to be made to found a church, the doctrines of which it would be no more possible to reject than the truths of astronomy, of chemistry, or of any other science.

*P.* You are putting forward a novel proposal for an universal church, the fundamental doctrine of which is to be the duty of seeking truth and self-improvement as the means of finding them. Teachers in this church would have to abstain from imposing, and to rely upon their capacity for expounding, as full of faith as teachers of science in the conclusions which must be arrived at, where the teachers are qualified for their work. Is a proposal of this kind likely to find favour with theologians as we observe them at the present day?

*T.* Possibly not. Nevertheless, theologians share in the general movement. The striving for truth, the desire to vindicate the ways of God to man, to clear away the filth and encumbrances with which they have been defiled and obstructed, and to become worthy to walk in those ways has been irrepresable. In spite of the stake and the rack, massacres innumerable, mutilations, fines, and imprisonments, and the mutterings of the "odium theologicum," kept within bounds by the secular muzzle which now confines it, men have split and continue to split themselves into churches and sects, in every one of which we constantly hear the rumble and see the signs of theological disruption.

*P.* Can it be that the dire afflictions which you have mentioned, and the unsettled state of feeling which still prevail, can arise out of the pure love of truth and singleness of purpose in seeking and propagating it?

*T.* Rather out of the effort to repress it. We speak feelingly. We have suffered great distress of mind. The theological intolerance of freedom of opinion and expression is frightful. Theologians cannot bear to hear their own doctrines questioned, nor contradictions charged to them, which they see others ready to admit, although imperceptible to themselves.

*P.* But do not the controversies between various sects, and even the more bitter controversies within the precincts of each, tend to elicit truth? Are they not better than a dull and apathetic acquiescence in accepted doctrines which, unless

former experience has deceived us, are likely to be discarded eventually as superstitious misrepresentations of religion?

*T.* There will be better hopes of improvement for churches, and also for their permanence, when once the members of them shall be generally convinced of these truths, and so confident in their ability to teach and defend their own doctrines as to welcome all criticisms and objections. They will then have the benefit of "controversy" relieved from its bitterness.

*P.* As you would neither have the truth, or what is believed to be the truth, undefended, nor its assailants deterred from expressing and recommending their objections, are you prepared to point out how it is possible to avoid bitterness of feeling and aversion while we are defending sacred truths against those who, as we think, are attacking them ingeniously and malignantly?

*T.* We are not. But we need not, on that account, feel any difficulty about the spirit in which discussions and controversies for the propagation and maintenance and defence of sacred truths ought to be conducted. While it behoves everybody to seek and to worship truth devoutly, it also behoves us to guard ourselves against illusions in regard to truth, by placing no impediments or discouragements in the way of those who would warn us of our misapprehensions. Our opponents, it is true, may be in error themselves, but the mortification of wounded self-love may also prevent our seeing how thoroughly our errors have been exposed and our arguments refuted by others.

Besides, an ingenious attack upon "truth" is a warning to teachers that they have been unsuccessful as teachers. An ingenious exposure of what is false in the guise of truth, implies detection of the "false"; but an ingenious attack upon truth itself can only mean detection of the ignorance of those who have been left by their teachers imperfectly instructed, and thus exposed to the mis-teaching of others. The cure for this—the means for its discontinuance, must be sought for, not in outcries against the malignity of others, but in self-re-

proaches followed up by the correction of former short-comings in teachers.

Sympathy with those who concur in our tastes, sentiments, and convictions, is inevitable. Attraction towards them may mean repulsion from others. The knowledge of this tendency in our nature should act as a caution, with all lovers of truth, to be slow in assuming that their opponents are mistaken, because they do not at once see the force of the objections which they are urging, or of the arguments with which the objections are enforced. The discovery and adoption of new truths, the correction of errors and illusions, and the progressive improvement of conduct will, it appears to us, be best promoted by dealing in this spirit with all who are attempting to introduce us to new truths, or new forms of truths, and to expose our illusions, or what are illusions only in their eyes, supposing them to be mistaken.

*P.* It would not be right to close our examination of the subject of theologico-morality, as contrasted with true morality, omitting to acknowledge the existence of a class, not a large one certainly, of theologians who differ greatly from those theologians whose morality we have been discussing, and to whom, accordingly, any censure which others may deserve does not necessarily apply. They admit that morality, or the science and art of conduct, is quite distinct from and independent of theology. So far as they study and expound morality as a system of rules of conduct adapted to promote the welfare of mankind, they will be free from reproach. They deserve our gratitude as moral teachers, and are entitled to our respect as theologians.

Theologico-morality proper is the province of those other theologians, unfortunately the larger number, who through a long course of years have held that all knowledge, and particularly the knowledge of what constitutes virtue and vice, good and bad, right and wrong, in the conduct of man to man, is deducible from the Bible—not from the Bible as a repertory of knowledge, a mine of inexhaustible proofs of God's goodness,

to be explored and examined from age to age with the aid of new lights and new resources—but from the Bible as represented in some catalogues of books for sale, “in its original monastic boards, uncut,” or, where cut, disfigured, brutalized, besmeared, and misinterpreted by themselves, and their still more barbarous predecessors. As if it were not enough that each step in science, each improvement in legislation, each refinement in manners and sentiment, must be a triumph of knowledge over ignorance, after severe and protracted struggles; the ignorance and barbarism which knowledge had to vanquish were abetted by theologians, who threw over them the shield of that religion of which they were supposed to be the exponents and guardians.

It is this class of theologians alone which we have to combat. It is their immorality which we have to distinguish from morality as theologico-morality. Connivance at child-neglect, tolerance of bad conduct, and intolerance of freedom of thought and expression must be put a stop to, clamour they ever so vehemently to be the interpreters of God's will, and threaten us as they may with God's vengeance. To vindicate the ways of God to man is beyond their capacity. Be ours the care to preserve our minds, and the minds of all under our tutelage, from the pollution of mistaking their ways for the fruits of studying His ways—the clouds and darkness of theology and its immorality, for the sunshine and light of science and its morality.

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